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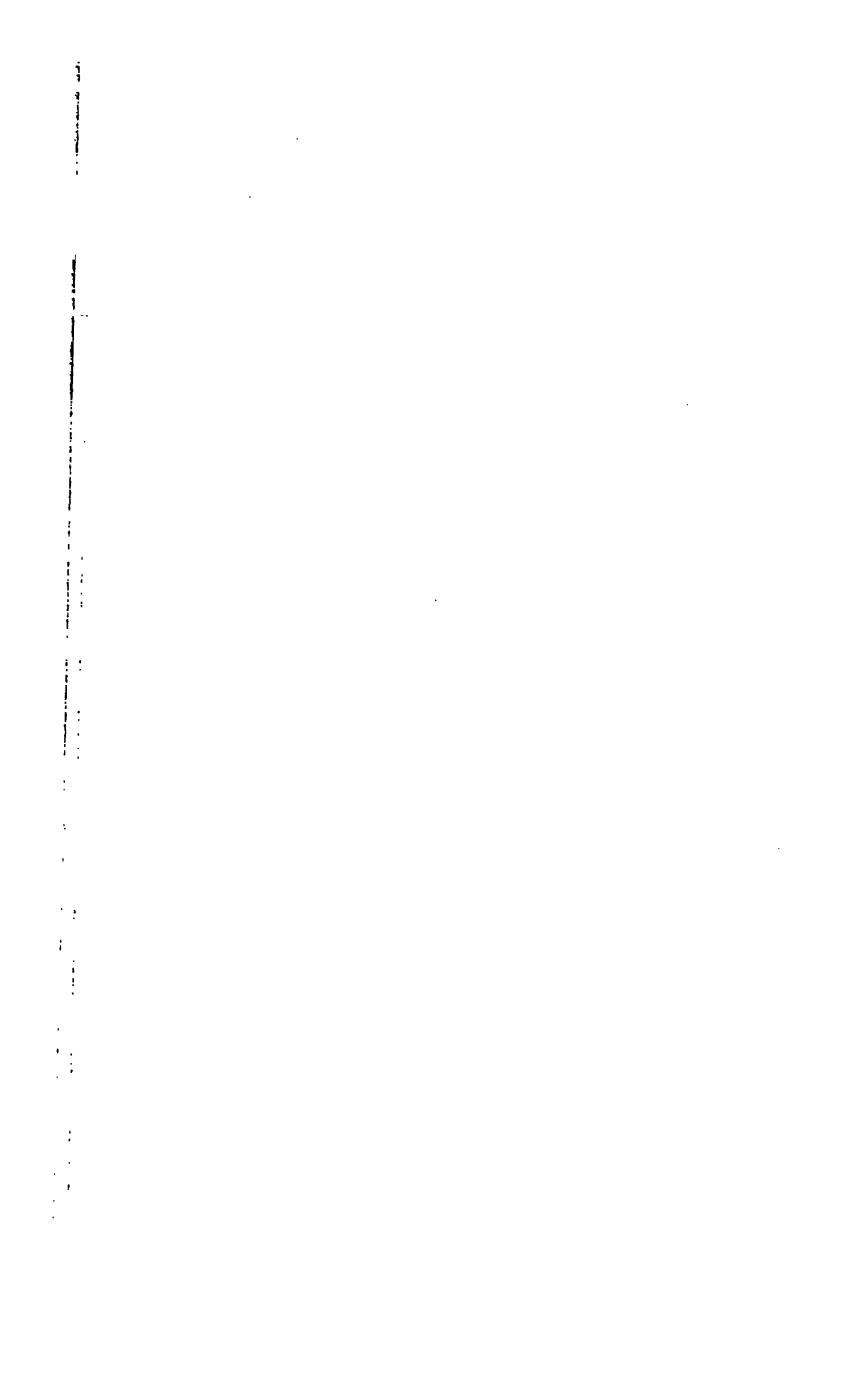
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RAMBLES



BY
LAND & WATER.

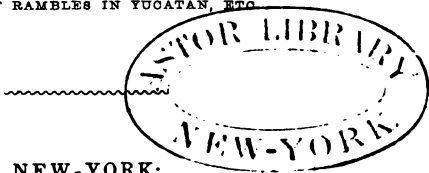
R A M B L E S
BY
L A N D A N D W A T E R,
OR
NOTES OF TRAVEL
IN
C U B A A N D M E X I C O ;

**INCLUDING A CANOE VOYAGE UP THE RIVER PANUCO, AND
RESEARCHES AMONG THE RUINS OF TAMAULIPAS, &c.**

"He turns his craft to small advantage,
Who knows not what to light it brings."

By B. M. NORMAN,

AUTHOR OF RAMBLES IN YUCATAN, ETC.



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P R E F A C E .

THE present work claims no higher rank than that of a humble offering to the Ethnological studies of our country. Some portions of the field which it surveys, have been traversed often by others, and the objects of interest which they present, have been observed and treated of, it may be, with as much fidelity to truth, and in a more attractive form. Of that the reading public will judge for itself. But there are other matters in this work, which are now, for the first time, brought to light. And it is the interest, deep and growing, which hangs about every thing relating to those mysterious relics of a mysterious race, which alone emboldens the author to venture *once more* upon the troubled sea of literary enterprise. Had circumstances permitted, he would have extended his researches among the sepulchres of the past, with the hope of securing a more ample, and a more worthy

contribution to the museum of American Antiquities. He has done what he could, under the circumstances in which he was placed. From what he has been enabled to accomplish, alone and unaided, he hopes that others, more capable, and better furnished with "the sinews" of travel, will be induced to make a thorough exploration of these regions of ruined cities and empires, and bring to light their almost boundless treasures of curious and interesting lore. The field is immense. It is, as yet, scarcely entered upon. No one of its boundaries is accurately ascertained. The researches made, and the materials gathered, are yet insufficient to enable us to solve satisfactorily the great problem of the origin of the races, that once filled this vast region with the arts and luxuries of civilization, and reared those mighty and magnificent structures, and fashioned those wonderful specimens of sculptured art, which now remain, in ruins, to perpetuate the memory of their greatness, though not of their names.

The exploration and illustration of these marvels of antiquity, belong appropriately to American literature. They should be accomplished by American enterprise. If not soon attempted, the honor, the pleasure, and the profit, will assuredly fall into other hands. Enough has already been done, to awaken a general interest and curiosity among the wonder-seeking and world-exploring adventurers of Europe; and, if we do not speedily follow up our small beginnings, with an

efficient and thorough survey, the Belzonis, and the Champollions of the Old World, will have anticipated our purpose, and borne away forever the palm and the prize.

But who shall undertake the arduous achievement? Who shall be responsible for its faithful execution? If the difficulties are too great for individual enterprise, could it not be accomplished by a concert of action between the numerous respectable Historical and Antiquarian Societies of our country? What more interesting field for their united labors? Which of them will take the hint, and set the ball in motion?

It is only required, that when it is done, it should be well done—not a mere experiment in book-making, a catch-penny picture book, without plan, or argument, or conclusion, leaving all the questions it proposed to discuss and solve, more deeply involved in the mist than before—but a substantial standard work, complete, thorough and conclusive, such as all our libraries would be proud to possess, and posterity would be satisfied to rely upon. There are men among us of the right kind, with the taste, the courage, the zeal, and the skill both literary and artistic, to do the work as it should be done. But they have not the means to go on their own account. They must be sent duly commissioned and provided, prepared and resolved to abide in the field, till they have traversed it in all its length and breadth and investigated and decyphered

so far as it can now be done, every trace that remains of its ancient occupants and rulers—and the country, and the world, will reap the advantage of their labors.

The author does not presume to flatter himself, that he has done any thing, in his present or any other humble offering, towards the accomplishment of such a work as the above suggestion proposes. He is fully conscious of his incompetence to such an undertaking. His main desire, and his highest aim, has been to present the matter in such a light, as to awaken the attention, and stimulate the interest of those who have the means, the influence, and the capacity to do it ample justice. And yet, he would not be true to himself, if he did not declare, that, in the effort to secure this end, he has used his utmost endeavor to afford, to the reader of his notes, a just equivalent for that favorable regard, which is found in that wholesome impulse which ought invariably and naturally to precede the perusal of any book.

New Orleans, October, 1845.

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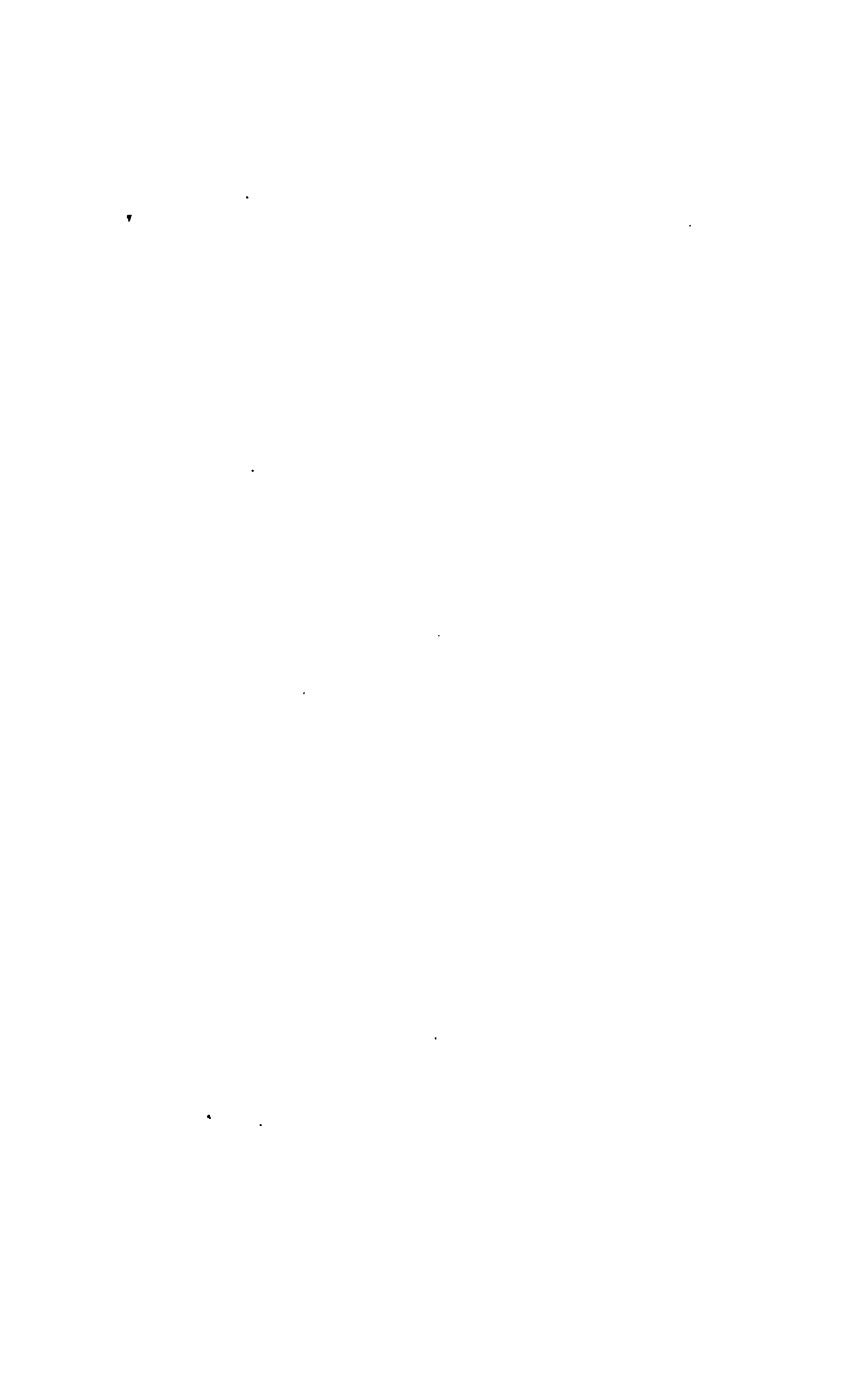
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RAMBLES BY LAND AND WATER.

CHAPTER I.

VOYAGE FROM NEW ORLEANS TO HAVANA. DESCRIPTION OF THE CAPITAL OF CUBA.

INTRODUCTORY remarks.—Departure from New Orleans.—Compagnons de voyage.—Their different objects.—Grumblers and grumbling.—Arrival at Havana.—Passports.—The Harbor.—The Fortifications.—The City.—Its streets and houses.—Anecdote of a sailor.—Society in Cuba.—The nobility.—“Sugar noblemen.”—Different grades of Society.—Effects upon the stranger.—Charitable judgment invoked.—Hospitality of individuals.—General love of titles and show.—Festival celebration.—Neatness of the Habañeros.

Who, in these days of easy adventure, does not make a voyage, encounter the perils of the boisterous ocean, gaze with rapture upon its illimitable expanse, make verses upon its deep, unfathomable blue—if perchance the Muse condescends to bear him company—plant his foot on a foreign shore, scrutinize the various objects which are there presented to his view, moralize upon them all, contemplate nations in their past, present

and future existence, swell with wonder at the largeness of his comprehension—and return, if haply he may, to his native land, to pour into the listening ears of friends and countrymen, the tale of his ups and downs, his philosophic gatherings, with undisguised complacency? Whose history does not present a chapter analogous to this? We might almost write one universal epitaph, and apply it to every individual who has flourished in the present century.—“He lived, travelled, wrote a book, and died.”

And, seeing that in this auspicious age, when the public mind is alive

“To every peril, pain and dread of woe,
That *genius* condescends to undergo—”

when it seems disposed to appreciate the toil of intellectual effort, by the deference which it pays, the obedience it yields, and the signal support which it gives, to the meritorious productions of the historian, the statesman and the scholar; when we behold the power of discrimination so strikingly developed in the fact, that men are infinitely more regaled with the simple, truthful narrative, than with the ponderous tome of fictitious events, however pleasing the fabrication is made to appear;—who, it may be asked, I care not whether he has washed his hands in the clouds, while tossed upon the summit of a troubled wave, or looked out upon the world, from Alps highest peak, or whether he has leaned over the side of an humble canoe, to disturb the tranquil waters of some placid stream, above the bosom of which, his modest aspirations will never suffer him to rise,—who that has *travelled*, it matters not *how*,

can do otherwise than exclaim, "Oh that my words were now written—Oh that they were printed in a book!"

Though not disposed to allow that no higher sentiment than this prevalent *cacoethes scribendi* has influenced me in the present attempt, I am, nevertheless, so thoroughly convinced of its epidemic prevalence at the present time, that I am resolved neither to wonder nor complain, if friends as well as foes, "gentle readers" as well as carping critics, should set it down as only and unquestionably a symptom. I shall retain my own opinion, however, albeit I do not express it; and, contenting, nay congratulating myself with being in good company, shall complacently set out upon another "ramble," and sit down to another book, whenever

" the stars propitious shine,"

or health, or business, drives me away from my quiet pursuits at home.

It is no slight gratification, it must be allowed, to be enabled, by so feeble an effort, to make all one's friends, as well as a portion of the great world unknown, *compagnons de voyage* in all our rambles—to bring them into such a magnetic communication with our souls, that they shall at once see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and enjoy, without the toil and weariness of travel, all that is worthy of remembrance and record, in our various adventures by sea and land.

On the 20th of January, 1844, in company with sixty fellow passengers, I turned my back upon the crescent city, and embarked on board the Steam Ship Alabama, Captain Windle, bound from New Orleans to Havana. Many of our number, like myself, were in

pursuit of health and pleasure, some were braving the dangers and enduring the privations of the passage, for the purpose of amassing wealth in the sugar and coffee trade; and others were seeking, what they probably will never find this side the grave, a happier home than the one they were leaving behind them.

With a variety of humors, but for the most part with light hearts, we committed ourselves to the mercy of a kind Providence, a capricious element, and a competent and gentlemanly captain; and, setting aside such regrets as the sensitive mind cannot but indulge, in bidding adieu to the land of its birth, the companions of youth, and the faithful friends of after years, to visit distant and dangerous regions, to invite disease and brave death in many forms, we were probably as happy and merry a company as ever pursued their trackless path over the bounding deep. Our ship and its regulations were unexceptionable, our table was sumptuously spread, and the weather, all that the most fastidious invalid could desire.

To the above description of our company, I ought, perhaps, to make an exception in favor of a few professional grumblers from our fatherland. "Those John Bulls" of our company, ceased not their murmurings and repinings, until the recollection of imaginary wrongs, was swallowed up in the experience of real and substantial suffering, in the land of their glorious anticipations. But we must not marvel at, or find fault with, the redeeming trait of British character. It has long been universally admitted that John Bull is a grumbler. Whether it is a "streak in the blood," a universal family characteristic, or a matter of national

education, I know not; but it certainly belongs to the species, as truly and distinctively as a light heart and a gay deportment do, to their neighbors on the other side of the channel. It matters not whether you speak of the King or the Queen, the Royal Patronage or the doings of Parliament, of England, or France, or the moon, he is always ready with a loud and argumentative complaint, drawn from his own experience. If you sympathize with him, well; if not, his indifference to your regard will certainly match your stoicism. Talk to him about Church affairs; and, in all probability, he will find a "true bill" against every Ecclesiastical officer, from his Grace down to the humblest subordinate. Still, if it be a redeeming trait, why should we not respect it as such? True, it does not *sound* well, to hear one speak in terms of approbation respecting a *grumbler*. But surely, it must be simply because we are not accustomed to view this character in its proper light. A popular English writer observes, that "it is probably this harsh and stubborn but honest propensity, which forms the bulwark of British grandeur abroad, and of British freedom at home. In short, it is this, *more than any thing else*, which has contributed to make, and still contributes to keep England what it is." No—it will never answer to make war upon a character like that of Bull. We may occasionally introduce him to the reader, but it shall be with a just appreciation of his *imprint*, and a profound regard for his material substance.

After sixty hours delightful sail, we passed the celebrated castle of the Moro, and entered the harbor of Havana. Contrary to our expectations, we were per-

mitted to land with but little delay or inconvenience, except that which arose from "Elnorte," or a dry norther, which was blowing when we arrived, and rendered our landing a little uncomfortable. The thermometer stood at 70°, and the "*natives*" were shivering under the severity of the cold!

The traveller, visiting this Island, should furnish himself with a passport, issued or verified by the Spanish Consul, at the port from which he embarks. When furnished with this indispensable credential, if he pay a strict regard to the laws of the island, little difficulty is to be apprehended; but, neglecting this, he will be subject to fines and the most vexatious delays; and, probably, he will be prevented from landing. Strangers proceeding into the interior, for a period not exceeding four months, must also be prepared with a license from the Governor to that effect, countersigned by the Consul of the nation to which he belongs. This requisition is undoubtedly made upon the unsuspecting traveller, in consequence of impositions practiced by foreigners, during the recent difficulties which have taken place in Cuba. Thus will undisguising honesty ever suffer in the faults of a common humanity.

The harbor of Havana is one of the best in the world. The entrance into it is by a narrow channel, admitting only one vessel at a time, while its capacious basin within, is capable of containing more than a thousand ships. The view of the harbor, as you approach it from without, with its forest of masts, and the antique looking buildings and towers of the city, contrasting powerfully with the luxuriant verdure of the hills in the back-ground, is scarcely second to any

in the world, in panoramic beauty and effect; while the view sea-ward, after you enter the sheltered bay, the waters of the Gulf Stream lashing the very posts of the narrow gateway by which you came in, presents one of those bold and striking contrasts, which the eye can take in, and the mind appreciate, but which no pencil can pourtray, no pen describe.



MORO CASTLE.

The celebrated Moro, resting upon its craggy eminence, frowns over the narrow inlet. The Cabafias crowning every summit of the hills opposite the city, is a continuous range of fortifications of great extent, from whose outer parapet, elevated at least a hundred and fifty feet above the level of the sea, a most commanding view of the city and its beautiful environs is obtained. These fortifications are said to have cost forty millions of dollars. Within a mile on the opposite shore from the Moro, is still another fortress, so situated upon a considerable height, that its batteries could easily

sweep the whole space between. Looking down from these frowning battlements upon the busy scene below, I was struck with the variety of flags, from almost every nation under heaven, blending their various hues and curious devices, amid the thick forest of masts that lay at my feet. But of all the gay and flaunting streamers that waved proudly in the morning breeze, the stripes and stars, the ensign of freedom, the pride of my own green forest land, appeared always most conspicuous.

The city of Havana stands on a plain, on the west side of the harbor, but is gradually, with its continually increasing population, stretching itself up into the bosom of the beautifully verdant hills by which it is surrounded. Its general appearance is that of a provincial capital of Spain. There is an air of antiquity about this, and the cities of Mexico, which has no similitude in the United States. The streets, which are straight and at right angles to each other, are Mc-Adamized, and, in good weather, are remarkably clean; but, during the rainy season, they become almost impassable. They are also very narrow, and without any side walks for the foot passenger. The houses, many of which are one story high, with flat roofs, have a general air of neatness and comfort. They are usually either white or yellow washed. Many of them are of the old Moorish style of architecture, dark and sombre, as the ages to which it traces back its origin. The doors and windows reach from the ceiling to the floor, and would give an airy and agreeable aspect to the buildings, were it not for their massive walls, and the iron gratings to the windows, which remind one too

strongly of the prison's gloom. It is here, however, that the females enjoy the luxury of the air, and display their charms. They are never seen walking in the streets. Those who cannot afford the expense of a *volante*, arraying themselves with the same care as they would for a promenade, or a party, may be seen daily peering through their grated windows upon the passers by, and holding familiar conversation with their friends and acquaintances in the streets. Many a bright lustrous eye, and fairy-like foot, have I thus seen through the wires of her cheerful cage, which were scarcely ever seen beyond it.

A characteristic anecdote is related of an American sailor, who saw several ladies looking out upon the street, through their grated parlor windows. Supposing them to be prisoners, and sympathizing with their forlorn condition, he told them to keep up a good heart,—and then, after observing that he had been in limbo himself, he threw them a dollar, to the great amusement of the spectators, who understood the position of the inmates.

But notwithstanding the gloomy appearance of the windows, the houses are well ventilated by interior courts, which permit a free circulation of air,—a commodity which is very desirable in these latitudes. The floors are of flat stone or brick, the walls stuccoed or painted,—and the traveller, judging from the external appearance, is led to imagine that within, every desirable accommodation may be obtained. In this, however, he is disappointed, and must content himself with some privations. Huge door-ways and windows, a spacious saloon, together with solidity of construction, are the

chief objects to which the architect in this country seems to direct his attention. The main entrance answers the purpose of a coach-house; and it is no uncommon thing to see the *volantes* occupying a very considerable portion of the parlor. The amount demanded for rent, in proportion to similar accommodations in other cities, is exorbitant. The present population of the city and its suburbs, is about 185,000.

Society in Havana,—and it is the same throughout the island—is a singular anomaly to the stranger. It is neither that of the city, nor that of the country alone—neither national, oecumenical, nor provincial, nor a mixture of all. There are three distinct classes of what may be termed respectable society—the Spanish, the creole, and the foreigner. Among the former, with here and there an individual of the second grade, there are some who have purchased titles of nobility, at prices varying from thirty to fifty thousand dollars. They are often distinguished by the ludicrous sobriquet of “sugar noblemen,” most of them having acquired their titles from the proceeds of their sugar plantations. Besides these, there are some few who have obtained the coveted distinction, as a reward for military services. Though more honorably obtained, the title is of less value to such, as they rarely have the means to support the style, which usually accompanies the rank. There are some sixty or seventy persons in the island, thus distinguished, who cannot, as a matter of course, condescend to associate in common, with the untitled grades below them. Neither do they maintain any social relations among themselves. The proud Spaniard despises the creole, and, titled or plebeian, will have

nothing to do with him, beyond the necessary courtesies of business. Then the "nobleman," who has worn his dearly bought honors *twenty years*, esteems it quite beneath his dignity to exchange civilities with those *novi homines*, who are but ten years removed from the vulgar atmosphere of common life;—while he, in his turn, is quite too green to stand on a par with those, whose ancestors, for two or three generations back, have been known to fame.

The same impassable distinctions exist among the plebeian grades of society. The Spaniard hates the foreign resident, and will have no intercourse with him, except so far as his interest, in the ordinary transactions of business, requires. He despises the creole, who, in his turn, hates the Spaniard, and is jealous of the foreigner. The result of this position of these antagonist elements of society is, that there is no such thing as general social intercourse among the inhabitants of Cuba, and scarcely any chance at all for the stranger, to be introduced to any society but that of the foreign residents. As these are from almost all nations, the range, for any particular one, is necessarily small.

This being the case, with the constitution of society in Cuba, it would be extremely difficult for a temporary sojourner correctly to delineate the character of its inhabitants, perhaps, even unfair to attempt it. He can never see them, as they see each other. He can rarely learn, from his personal observation, any thing of society, as a whole, though he may often have favorable opportunities of becoming favorably acquainted with individual families. And here, two remarks seem to me to be demanded, before leaving this subject.

First, that in all cases where such marked distinctions, and deeply rooted jealousies exist between the different sections of society, the open slanders and covert insinuations of the one against the other, should be received with the most liberal allowances for prejudice. Envy and contempt are, by their very natures, evil-eyed, uncharitable, and arrant liars. They see through a distorted medium. They judge with one ear always closed. And he who receives their decisions as law will generally abuse his own common sense and good nature, by condemning the innocent unheard. Secondly, if the society which Cuba might enjoy may be judged of by the known urbanity and hospitality of individuals, it might become, by the breaking down of these artificial barriers, the very paradise of patriarchal life. I know of nothing in the world to compare with the free, open-handed, whole-souled hospitality which the merchant, or planter, of whatever grade, lavishes upon those, who are commended to his regard by a respectable introduction from abroad. With such a passport, he is no longer a stranger, but a brother, and it is the fault of his own heart if he is not as much at home in the family, and on the estate of his friend, as if it were his own. There is nothing forced, nothing constrained in all this. It is evidently natural, hearty, and sincere, and you cannot partake of it, without feeling, however modest you may be, that you are conferring, rather than receiving a favor. This remark may be applied, with almost equal force, to many of the planters in our Southern states, and in the other West India Islands. Many and many are the invalid wanderers from home, who have known and felt it, like

gleams of sunshine in their weary pilgrimage, whose hearts will gratefully respond to all that I have said. What a pity then, that such noble elements should always remain in antagonism to each other, instead of amalgamating into one harmonious confraternity, mutually blessing and being blessed, in all the sweet humanizing interchanges of social life.

Much as the inferior grades of society envy and dislike those above them, they all display the same love of show, the same passion for titles, trappings, and badges of honor, whether civil or military, whenever they come within their reach. And when attained, either temporarily or permanently, their fortunate possessors do not fail to look down on those beneath them, with the same supercilious pride and self gratulation, which they so recently condemned in others. I saw some striking, and to me, exceedingly ludicrous developments of this trait of character, during the progress of a festival celebration, in honor of the day, when queen Isabel was declared of age, and all the military and civil powers swore allegiance to her Catholic Majesty. The ceremonies of this celebration were continued through three days. The Plaza, and the quarters of the military, were splendidly illuminated with variegated lamps, and the buildings, public and private, were hung with tapestry and paintings, interspersed with small brilliant lights. Business was entirely suspended, and the streets were thronged with gay excited multitudes, arrayed with every species of finery, and decked with every ornament of distinction, which their circumstances, or position in society, would allow. Reviews of troops, and sham fights on land and sea, in

which the Governor, and all the high dignitaries of the island, took part, occupied a portion of the time, the remainder being filled up with balls, masquerades, and a round of other amusements.

I do not know that it has been remarked by any other writer, but I observed it so often as to satisfy myself that it was a general characteristic of the better classes of the Habañeros, that they have a singular antipathy to water. After a shower of rain, they are seldom seen in the streets, except in their *volantes*, till they have had time to become perfectly dry. When necessity compels them to appear, they walk with the peculiar circumspection of a cat, picking their way with a care and timidity that often seems highly ludicrous. They are neat and cleanly in their persons, almost to a fault, and it is the fear of contracting the slightest soil upon their dress, that induces this scrupulous nicety in "taking heed to their steps."

CHAPTER II.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS OF HAVANA, AND THE TOMB OF COLUMBUS.

THE Tacon Theatre.—The Fish Market.—Its Proprietor.—The Cathedral.—Its adornments.—View of Romanism.—Infidelity.—The Tomb of Columbus.—The Inscription.—Reflections suggested by it. The Removal of his Remains. Mr. Irving's eloquent reflections.—A misplaced Monument.—Plaza de Armas.

AMONG the public buildings in Havana, there are many worthy of a particular description. Passing over the Governor's House, the Intendencia, the Lunatic Asylum, Hospitals, etc., to which I had not time to give a personal inspection, I shall notice only the Tacon Theatre, the Fish Market, and the Cathedral.

The Tacon Theatre is a splendid edifice, and is said to be capable of containing four or five thousand spectators. It has even been stated, that, at the recent masquerade ball given there, no less than seven thousand were assembled within its walls. This building was erected by an individual, at an expense of two hundred thousand dollars. It contains three tiers of boxes, two galleries, and a pit, besides saloons, coffee-rooms, offices, etc., etc. A trellis of gilded iron, by which the boxes

are balustraded, imparts to the house an unusually gay and airy appearance. The pit is arranged with seats resembling arm-chairs, neatly covered, and comfortably cushioned. The Habañeros are a theatre-going people, and bestow a liberal patronage upon any company that is worthy of it.

The Fish Market is an object of no little interest in Havana, not only for the rich variety of beautiful fishes that usually decorate its long marble table, but for the place itself, and its history. It was built during the administration of Tacon, by a Mr. Marti, who, for a service rendered the government, in detecting a gang of smugglers, with whom it has been suspected he was too well acquainted, was permitted to monopolize the sale of fish in the city for twenty years. Having the prices at his own control, he has made an exceedingly profitable business of it, and is now one of the rich men of the island. He is the sole proprietor of the Tacon Theatre, which is one of the largest in the world, and which has also the privilege of a twenty years monopoly, without competition from any rival establishment.

The Fish Market is one hundred and fifty feet in length, with one marble table extending from end to end, the roof supported by a series of arches, resting upon plain pillars. It is open on one side to the street, and on the other to the harbor. It is consequently well ventilated and airy. It is the neatest and most inviting establishment of the kind that I have ever seen in any country; and no person should visit Havana, without paying his respects to it.

The Cathedral is a massive building, constructed in

the ecclesiastical style of the fifteenth century. It is situated in the oldest and least populous part of the city, near the Fish Market, and toward the entrance of the port. It is a gloomy, heavy looking pile, with little pretensions to architectural taste and beauty, in its exterior, though the interior is considered very beautiful. It is built of the common coral rock of that neighborhood, which is soft and easily worked, when first quarried, but becomes hard by exposure to the atmosphere. It is of a yellowish white color, and somewhat smooth when laid up, but assumes in time a dark, dingy hue, and undergoes a slight disintegration on its surface, which gives it the appearance of premature age and decay.

In the interior, two ranges of massive columns support the ceiling, which is high, and decorated with many colors in arabesque, with figures in fresco. The sides are filled, as is usual in Roman Catholic churches, with the shrines of various Saints, among which, that of St. Christoval, the patron of the city, is conspicuous. The paintings are numerous; and some of them, the works of no ungifted pencils, are well worthy of a second look.

The shrines display less of gilding and glitter than is usual in other places. They are all of one style of architecture, simple and unpretending; and the effect of the whole is decidedly pleasing, if not imposing. This effect is somewhat heightened by the dim, uncertain light which pervades the building. The windows are small and high up towards the ceiling, and cannot admit the broad glare of day, to disturb the solemn and gloomy grandeur of the place of prayer.

It has been observed by residents as well as by strangers, that the attendance on the masses and other ceremonies of the Roman church, has greatly diminished within a few late years. I have often seen nearly as many officiating priests, as worshippers, at matins and vespers. They are attended, as in all other places, chiefly by women, and not, as the romances of the olden time would have us suppose it once was, by the young, the beautiful, the warm-hearted and enthusiastic, but by the old and ugly, so that a looker-on might be led to imagine that the holy place was only a *dernier resort*, and refuge for those, for whom the world had lost its charms. That there were some exceptions, however, to this remark, my memory and my heart must bear witness—some, whose graceful, voluptuous figures, bent down before their shrines, their beaming faces and keen black eyes scarce hidden by their mantillas, might have furnished a more stoical heart than mine with a very plausible excuse for paying homage to them, rather than to the saints, before whose shrines they were kneeling.

In the various religious orders of this church, there has been a corresponding diminution of numbers and zeal. The convents of friars, in Havana, have been much reduced, and but few young men are found, who are disposed to join them; so that, in another generation, they may become quite extinct, unless their numbers are replenished from the mother country. The Government has taken possession of their buildings, and converted them to other uses, and pensioned off their inmates, allowing a premium to those who would quit the monastic life, and engage in secular business.

Among the people, infidelity seems to have taken the place of the old superstition. Their holy-days are still kept up, because they love the excitement and revelry, to which they have been accustomed. Their frequent recurrence is a great annoyance to those who have business at the Custom House, and other public offices, while they add nothing to the religious or moral aspect of the place. Sunday is distinguished from the other days of the week, only by the increase of revelry, cock-fighting, gambling, and every other species of unholy employment. These are certainly no improvement upon the customs of other days, for blind superstition is better than profaneness, and ignorance than open vice. But, in one respect, the protestant sojourner in Havana may feel and acknowledge that times have changed for the better, since he is not liable now, as formerly, to be knocked down in the street, or imprisoned, for refusing to kneel in the dirt, when "the host" was passing.

In this Cathedral, on the right side of the great altar, is "The Tomb of Columbus." A small recess made in the wall to receive the bones, is covered with a marble tablet about three feet in length. Upon the face of this is sculptured, in bold relief, the portrait of the great discoverer, with his right hand resting upon a globe. Under the portrait, various naval implements are represented, with the following inscription in Spanish.

¡ O Restos é Imagen del grande Colon !
Mil siglos durad guardados en la Orna,
Y en la remembranza de nuestra Nacion.

On the left side of the high Altar, opposite the tomb, hangs a small painting, representing a number of priests performing some religious ceremony. It is very indifferent as a work of art, but possesses a peculiar value and interest, as having been the constant cabin companion of Columbus, in all his eventful voyages, a fact which is recorded in an inscription on a brass plate, attached to the picture.

The Lines on the tablet may be thus translated into English.

O Remains and Image of the great Columbus !
A thousand ages may you endure, guarded in this Urn ;
And in the remembrance of our Nation.

Such is the sentiment inscribed on the last resting place of the ashes of the discoverer of a world. An inscription worthy of its place, bating the arrogance and selfishness of the last line, which would claim for a single nation, that which belongs as a common inheritance to the world. It is a pardonable assumption however ; for, where is the nation, under the face of heaven, that would not, if it could, monopolize the glory of such a name ?

The glory of a name ! Alas ! that those who win, are so seldom allowed to wear it ! Through toil and struggle, through poverty and want, through crushing care and heart-rending disappointments, through seas of fire and blood, and perhaps through unrelenting persecution, contumely and reproach, they climb to some proud pinnacle, from which even the ingratitude and injustice of a heartless world cannot bring them down ; and there, alone, deserted and pointed at, like an eagle

entangled in his mountain eyrie, amid the screams and hootings of inferior birds, they die,—bequeathing their greatness to the world, leaving upon the generation around them a debt of unacknowledged obligation, which after ages and distant and unborn nations, shall contend for the honor of assuming forever. The glory of a name! What a miserable requital for the cruel neglect and iron injustice, which repaid the years of suffering and self-sacrifice, by which it was earned!

Columbus died at Valladolid, on the 20th of May, 1506, aged 70 years. His body was deposited in the convent of St. Francisco, and his funeral obsequies were celebrated with great pomp, in the parochial church of Santa Maria de la Antigua. In 1513, his remains were removed to Seville, and deposited, with those of his son, and successor, Don Diego, in the chapel of Santo Christo, belonging to the Carthusian Monastery of Las Cuevas. In 1536, the bodies of Columbus and his son were both removed to the island of Hispaniola, which had been the centre and seat of his vice-royal government in this western world, and interred in the principal chapel of the Cathedral of the city of San Domingo. But even here, they did not rest in quiet. By the treaty of peace in 1795, Hispaniola, with other Spanish possessions in these waters, passed into the hands of France. With a feeling highly honorable to the nation, and to those who conducted the negotiations, the Spanish officers requested and obtained leave to translate the ashes of the illustrious hero to Cuba.

The ceremonies of this last burial were exceedingly magnificent and imposing, such as have rarely been rendered to the dust of the proudest monarchs on earth,

immediately after their decease, and much less after a lapse of almost three centuries. On the arrival of the San Lorenzo in the harbor of Havana, on the 15th of January, 1796, the whole population assembled to do honor to the occasion, the ecclesiastical, civil, and military bodies vying with each other in showing respect to the sacred relics. On the 19th, every thing being in readiness for their reception, a procession of boats and barges, three abreast, all habited in mourning, with muffled oars, moved solemnly and silently from the ship to the mole. The barge occupying the centre of these lines, bore a coffin, covered with a pall of black velvet, ornamented with fringes and tassels of gold, and guarded by a company of marines in mourning. It was brought on shore by the captains of the vessels, and delivered to the authorities. Conveyed to the Plaza de Armas, in solemn procession, it was placed in an ebony sarcophagus, made in the form of a throne, elaborately carved and gilded. This was supported on a high bier, richly covered with black velvet, forty-two wax candles burning around it.

In this position, the coffin was opened in the presence of the Governor, the Captain General, and the Commander of the royal marines. A leaden chest, a foot and a half square, by one foot in height, was found within. On opening this chest, a small piece of bone and a quantity of dust were seen, which was all that remained of the great Columbus. These were formally, and with great solemnity pronounced to be the remains of the "*incomparable Almirante Christoval Colon.*" All was then carefully closed up, and replaced in the ebony sarcophagus.

A procession was then formed to the Cathedral, in which all the pomp and circumstance of a military parade, and the solemn and imposing grandeur of the ecclesiastical ceremonial, were beautifully and harmoniously blended with the more simple, but not less heartfelt demonstrations of the civic multitude—the air waving and glittering with banners of every device, and trembling with volleys of musketry, and the ever returning minute guns from the forts, and the armed vessels in the harbor. The pall bearers were all the chief men of the island, who, by turns, for a few moments at a time, held the golden tassels of the sarcophagus.

Arrived at the Cathedral, which was hung in black, and carpeted throughout, while the massive columns were decorated with banners infolded with black, the sarcophagus was placed on a stand, under a splendid Ionic pantheon, forty feet high by fourteen square, erected under the dome of the church, for the temporary reception of these remains. The architecture and decorations of this miniature temple, were rich and beautiful in the extreme. Sixteen white columns, four on each side, supported a splendidly friezed architrave and cornice, above which, on each side, was a frontispiece, with passages in the life of Columbus figured in bas-relief. Above this, rising out of the dome of the pantheon, was a beautiful obelisk. The pedestal was ornamented with a crown of laurels, and two olive branches. On the lower part of the obelisk were emblazoned the arms of Columbus, accompanied by Time, with his hands tied behind him—Death, prostrate—and Fame, proclaiming the hero immortal in defiance of

Death and Time. Other emblematic figures occupied the arches of the dome.

The pantheon, and the whole Cathedral, was literally a-blaze with the light of wax tapers, several hundred of which were so disposed as to give the best effect to the imposing spectacle. The solemn service of the dead was chanted, mass was celebrated, and a funeral oration pronounced. Then, as the last responses, and the pealing anthem, resounded through the lofty arches of the Cathedral, the coffin was removed from the Pantheon, and borne by the Field Marshal, the Intendente, and other distinguished functionaries, to its destined resting place in the wall, and the cavity closed by the marble slab, which I have already described.

“When we read,” says the eloquent Mr. Irving, “of the remains of Columbus, thus conveyed from the port of St. Domingo, after an interval of nearly three hundred years, as sacred national reliques, with civic and military pomp, and high religious ceremonial; the most dignified and illustrious men striving who should most pay them reverence; we cannot but reflect, that it was from this very port he was carried off, loaded with ignominious chains, blasted apparently in fame and fortune, and followed by the revilings of the rabble. Such honors, it is true, are nothing to the dead, nor can they atone to the heart, now dust and ashes, for all the wrongs and sorrows it may have suffered: but they speak volumes of comfort to the illustrious, yet slandered and persecuted living, showing them how true merit outlives all calumny, and receives it glorious reward in the admiration of after ages.”

Near the Quay, in front of the Plaza de Armas, is a

plain ecclesiastical structure, in which the imposing ceremony of the mass is occasionally celebrated. It is intended to commemorate the landing of the great discoverer, and the inscription upon a tablet in the front of the building, conveys the impression that it was erected on the very spot where he first set foot upon the soil of Cuba. This, however, is an error. Columbus touched the shore of Cuba, at a point which he named Santa Catalina, a few miles west of Neuvas del Principe, and some three hundred miles east of Havana. He proceeded along the coast, westward, about a hundred miles, to the Laguna de Moron, and then returned. He subsequently explored all the southern coast of the island, from its eastern extremity to the Bay of Cortes, within fifty miles of Cape Antonio, its western terminus. Had he continued his voyage a day or two longer, he would doubtless have reached Havana, compassed the island, and discovered the northern continent.

The Plaza de Armas is beautifully ornamented with trees and fountains. It is also adorned with a colossal statue of Ferdinand VII.; and during the evenings, when the scene is much enlivened by the fine music of the military bands stationed in the vicinity, it is the general resort of citizens and strangers;—the former of whom come hither to enjoy the cheering melody of the music and the freshness of the breeze,—the latter, for the purpose of doing homage to the memory of him whose footsteps are supposed to have sanctified the ground. Here, and around the sepulchre of the departed, a holy reverence seems to linger, which attracts the visitor as to “pilgrim shrines,” before which he bends with respect and admiration.

The village of Regla, one of the suburbs of Havana, is situated on the eastern side of the harbor, about a mile from the city, and having constant communication with it, by means of a ferry. It is a place of about six thousand inhabitants, and is the great depot of the molasses trade. Immense tanks are provided to receive the molasses, as it comes in from the neighboring estates. I say the *neighboring* estates, for the article is of so little value, that it will not pay the expense of transportation from any considerable distance; and very large quantities of it are annually thrown away. In some places you may see the ditches by the road side filled with it. In others, the liquid is given to any who will take it away, though in doing so, they are expected to pay something more than its real value for the hogshead.

The greater part of the molasses that comes to Regla from the interior, to supply the export trade of Havana, is brought in five gallon kegs, on the backs of the mules, one on each side, after the manner of saddle-bags, or panniers. A common mule load is four or six kegs, equal to half, or two-thirds of a barrel. Large quantities are also transported in lighters from all the smaller towns on the coast, much of it coming in that way from a distance of more than a hundred miles. A large proportion of the article shipped from this port hitherto, having been unfit for ordinary domestic uses, and suitable only for the distillery, the trade in it has been greatly diminished by the operation of the mighty Temperance reform, which has blessed so large a portion of our favored land. I have not the means at hand to show the precise results; but will venture to assert,

from personal observation and knowledge of the matter, that the exports of this article from Cuba to this country, for distilling purposes, have fallen off more than one half in the last ten years.

The concentration of this once active and lucrative traffic at Regla, gave it, in former times, the aspect of a busy, thriving place. Now, it looks deserted and poor. It was formerly one of the many resorts of the pirates, robbers, and smugglers, who infested all the avenues to the capital, and carried on their business as a regular branch of trade, under the very walls of the city, and in full view of the custom-house and the castle. Thanks to the energetic administration of Tacon, they have no authorized rendezvous in Cuba now. Regla is consequently deserted. Its streets are as quiet as the green lanes of the country. Its houses are many of them going to decay. Its theatre is in ruins, and the spacious octagonal amphitheatre, once the arena for bull-fighting, the favorite spectacle of the Spaniards, both in Spain and in the provinces, and much resorted to from all quarters in the palmy days of piracy and intemperance, is now in a miserably dilapidated condition; affording the clearest proof of the immoral nature and tendency of the sport, by revealing the character of those who alone can sustain it. Tacon and temperance have ruined Regla.

The only amusement one can now find in Regla, is in listening to the wild and frightful stories of the robbers and robberies of other days. It is scarcely possible to conceive that scenes such as are there described, as of daily, or rather nightly occurrence, could have taken place in a spot now so quiet and secure, and without

any of those dark, mysterious lurking places, which the imagination so easily conjures up, as essential to the successful prosecution of the profession of an organized band of outlaws. The system set in operation by Tacon, is still maintained; and mounted guards are nightly seen scouring the deserted and comparatively quiet avenues, offering an arm of defence to the solitary and timid traveller, and a caution to the evil-disposed, that the stern eye of the law is upon them. Volumes of entertaining history, for those who have the taste to be entertained by the marvellous and horrible, might be written on this spot. And I respectfully recommend a pilgrimage to it, and a careful study of its scenery and topography, to those young novelists and magazine writers, who delight to revel in carnage, and blood, and treachery.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUBURBS OF HAVANA, AND THE INTERIOR OF THE ISLAND.

THE Gardens.—The Paseo de Tacon.—Guinness an inviting resort.—Scenery on the route.—Farms.—Hedges of Lime and Aloe.—Orange Groves.—Pines.—Luxuriance of the Soil.—Coffee and Sugar Plantations.—Forests.—Flowers and Birds.—The end of the Road.—Description of Guinness.—The Hotel.—The Church.—The Valley of Guinness.—Beautiful Scenery.—Other Resorts for Invalids.—Buena Esperanza.—The route to it.—Limonar.—Madruga.—Cardenas, etc.—Cuba the winter resort of Invalids.—Remarks of an intelligent Physician.—Pulmonary Cases.—Tribute to Dr. Barton.—The clearness of the Moon.—The beauties of a Southern Sky.—The Southern Cross.

THE neighborhood of Havana abounds with pleasant rides, and delightful resorts, in which the invalid may find the sweetest and most delicious repose, as well as invigorating recreation; while the man of cultivated taste, and the devout worshipper of nature, may revel in a paradise of delights. Among the many attractive localities, in the immediate vicinity of the city, the gardens of the Governor and the Bishop are pre-eminent.

Outside the city wall is the "Paseo de Tacon," which is a general resort, not only for equestrians and pedes-

trians, but also for visitors in their cumbrous *volantes*. The stranger will find himself richly rewarded on a visit to this frequented resort. It consists of three ways: the central, and widest, for carriages; and the two lateral, which are shaded by rows of trees and provided with stone seats, for foot passengers. It presents a lively and picturesque scene, crowded as it is with people of all classes, neatly, if not elegantly dressed.

A delightful excursion to Guinness occupies but four or five hours by rail-road. It is much frequented by invalids, as an escape from the monotonous routine of city life, and presents many advantages for the restoration of health, and the gratification of rural tastes and pursuits. Surrounded by luxurious groves of orange and other fruit trees,—by coffee and sugar plantations,—in full view of the table lands, proximating towards the mountains, and enjoying from November till May, a climate unequalled perhaps by any other on the face of the globe; the fortunate visitor cannot but feel that, if earth produces happiness in any of its charmed haunts, “the heart that is humble might hope for it here;” and the invalid, forgetting the object of his pursuit, might linger forever around its rich groves and shady walks. During three months of the year, the thermometer ranges about 80° at sunrise, seldom varying more than from 70° to 88°. Nearer the coast, there is more liability to fever.

In the trip to Guinness, we did not fly over the ground as we often do on some of the rail-roads of our own country, the rate seldom exceeding fifteen miles an hour. And it would be more loss than gain to the passengers to go faster. The country is too beautiful, too

rich in verdure, too luxuriant in fruits and flowers, and too picturesque in landscape scenery, to be hurried over at a breath. Passing the suburbs of the city, and the splendid gardens of Tacon, the road breaks out into the beautiful open country, threading its arrowy way through the rich plantations and thriving farms, whose vegetable treasures of every description can scarcely be paralleled on the face of the earth. The farms which supply the markets of the city with their daily abundance of necessaries and luxuries, occupy the foreground of this lovely picture. They are separated from each other, sometimes by hedges of the fragrant white flowering lime, or the stiff prim-looking aloe, (*agave americana*,) armed on every side with pointed lances, and lifting their tall flowering stems, like grenadier sentinels with their bristling bayonets, in close array, full twenty feet into the air. Those who have not visited the tropics, can scarcely conceive the luxuriant and gigantic growth of their vegetable productions. These hedges, once planted, form as impenetrable a barrier as a wall of adamant, or a Macedonian phalanx; and wo to the unmailed adventurer, who should attempt to scale or storm those self-armed and impregnable defences.

Within these natural walls, clustered in the golden profusion of that favored clime, are often seen extensive groves of orange and pine apple, whose perennial verdure is ever relieved and blended with the fragrant blossom—loading the air with its perfume, till the sense almost aches with its sweetness—and the luscious fruit, chasing each other in unfading beauty and inexhaustible fecundity, through an unbroken round of summers, that know neither spring time, nor decay. There is

nothing in nature more enchantingly wonderful to the eye than this perpetual blending of flower and fruit, of summer and harvest, of budding brilliant youth, full of hope and promise and gaiety, and mature ripe manhood, laden with the golden treasures of hopes realized, and promises fulfilled. How rich must be the resources of the soil, that can sustain, without exhaustion, this lavish and unceasing expenditure of its nutritious elements! How vigorous and thrifty the vegetation, that never falters nor grows old, under this incessant and prodigal demand upon its vital energies!

It is so with all the varied products of those ardent climes. Crop follows crop, and harvest succeeds harvest, in uninterrupted cycles of prolific beauty and abundance. The craving wants, the grasping avarice of man alone exceeds the unbounded liberality of nature's free gifts.

The coffee and sugar plantations, chequering the beautiful valleys, and stretching far up into the bosom of the verdant hills, are equally picturesque and beautiful with the farms we have just passed. They are, indeed, farms on a more extended scale, limited to one species of lucrative culture. The geometrical regularity of the fields, laid out in uniform squares, though not in itself beautiful to the eye, is not disagreeable as a variety, set off as it is by the luxuriant growth and verdure of the cane, and diversified with clumps of pines and oranges, or colonnades of towering palms. The low and evenly trimmed coffee plants, set in close and regular columns, with avenues of mangoes, palms, oranges, or pines, leading back to the cool and shady mansion of the proprietor, surrounded with its village of thatched

huts laid out in a perfect square, and buried in overshadowing trees, form a complete picture of oriental wealth and luxury, with its painful but inseparable contrast of slavery and wretchedness.

The gorgeous tints of many of the forest flowers, and the yet more gorgeous plumage of the birds, that fill the groves sometimes with melody delightful to the ear, and sometimes with notes of harshest discord, fill the eye with a continual sense of wonder and delight. Here the glaring scarlet flamingo, drawn up as in battle array on the plain, and there the gaudy parrot, glittering in every variety of brilliant hue, like a gay bouquet of clustered flowers amid the trees, or the delicate, irised, spirit-like humming birds, flitting, like animated flowerets from blossom to blossom, and coqueting with the fairest and sweetest, as if rose-hearts were only made to furnish honey-dew for their dainty taste—what can exceed the fairy splendor of such a scene!

But roads will have an end, especially when every rod of the way is replete with all that can gratify the eye, and regale the sense, of the traveller. The forty-five miles of travel that take you to Guinness, traversing about four-fifths of the breadth of the island, appear, to one unaccustomed to a ride through such garden-like scenery, quite too short and too easily accomplished; and you arrive at the terminus, while you are yet dreaming of the midway station, looking back, rather than forward, and lingering in unsatisfied delight among the fields and groves that have skirted the way.

San Julian de los Guinness is a village of about twenty-five hundred inhabitants, and one of the pleasantest in the interior of the Island. It is a place of considera-

ble resort for invalids, and has many advantages over the more exposed places near the northern shore. The houses in the village are neat and comfortable. The hotel is one of the best in the island. The church is large, built in the form of a cross, with a square tower painted blue. Its architecture is rude, and as unattractive as the fanciful color of its tower.

The valley, or rather the plain of Guinness, is a rich and well watered bottom, shut in on three sides by mountain walls, and extending between them quite down to the sea, a distance of nearly twenty miles. It is, perhaps, the richest district in the island, and in the highest state of cultivation. It is sprinkled all over with cattle and vegetable farms, and coffee and sugar estates, of immense value, whose otherwise monotonous surface is beautifully relieved by clusters, groves, and avenues of stately palms, and flowering oranges, mangoes and pines, giving to the whole the aspect of a highly cultivated garden.

I have dwelt longer upon the description of Guinness, and the route to it, because it will serve, as it respects the scenery, and the general face of the country, as a pattern for several other routes; the choice of which is open to the stranger, in quest of health, or a temporary refuge from the business and bustle of the city.

One of these is Buena Esperanza, the coffee estate of Dr. Finlay; near Alquizar, and about forty miles from Havana. One half of this distance is reached in about two hours, in the cars. The remainder is performed in *volantes*, passing through the pleasant villages of Bejucal, San Antonio, and Alquizar, and embracing a view of some of the most beautiful portions of Cuba. Lim-

onar, a small village, embosomed in a lovely valley, a few miles from Matanzas—Madruga, with its sulphur springs, four leagues from Guinness—Cardenas—Villa Clara—San Diego—and many other equally beautiful and interesting places, will claim the attention, and divide the choice of the traveller.

An intelligent writer remarks that, “with the constantly increasing facilities for moving from one part of this island to the other, the extension and improvement of the houses of entertainment in the vicinity of Havana, and the gaiety and bustle of the city itself during the winter months, great inducements are held out to visit this ‘queen of the Antilles;’ and perhaps the time is not far distant, when Havana may become the winter *Saratoga* of the numerous travellers from the United States, in search either of health or recreation.” He then proceeds to suggest, what must be obvious to any reflecting and observing mind, that those whose cases are really critical and doubtful, should always remain at home, where attendance and comforts can be procured, which money cannot purchase. To leave home and friends in the last stages of a lingering consumption, for example, and hope to renew, in a foreign clime and among strangers, the exhausted energies of a system, whose foundations have been sapped, and its vital functions destroyed, is but little better than madness. In such cases, the change of climate rarely does the patient any good, and particularly if accompanied with the usual advice—to “use the fruits freely.” Those, however, who are but slightly affected, who require no extra attention and nursing, but simply the benefit a favorable climate, co-operating with their own prudence in

diet and exercise, and who are willing to abide by the advice of an intelligent physician on the spot, may visit Cuba with confidence, nay, with positive assurance, that a complete cure will be effected. This is the easiest, and, in most cases, the cheapest course that can be pursued, in the earlier stages of bronchial affections.

As a lover of my species, and particularly of my countrymen, so many of whom have occasion to resort to blander climates, to guard against the insidious inroads of consumption, I cannot leave this subject, without making use of my privilege, as a writer, to say a word of an eminent physician, residing in Havana, who enjoys an exalted and deserved reputation in the treatment of pulmonary diseases. I refer to Dr. Barton, a gentleman whose name is dear, not only to the many patients, whom, under providence, he has restored from the verge of the grave, but to as numerous a circle of devoted friends, as the most ambitious affection could desire. His skill as a physician is not the only quality, that renders him peculiarly fitted to occupy the station, where providence has placed him. His kindness of heart, his urbanity of manners, his soothing attentions, his quick perception of those thousand nameless delicacies, which, in the relation of physician and patient, more than any other on earth, are continually occurring, give him a pre-eminent claim to the confidence and regard of all who are brought within the sphere of his professional influence. To the stranger, visiting a foreign clime in quest of health, far from home and friends, this is peculiarly important. And to all such, I can say with the fullest confidence, they will find in him al

that they could desire in the most affectionate father, or the most devoted brother.

In the interior of the island, I observed that the moon displays a far greater radiance than in higher latitudes. To such a degree is this true, that reading by its light was discovered to be quite practicable; and, in its absence, the brilliancy of the Milky Way, and the planet Venus, which glitters with so effulgent a beam as to cast a shade from surrounding objects, supply, to a considerable extent, the want of it. These effects are undoubtedly produced by the clearness of the atmosphere, and, perhaps, somewhat increased by the altitude. The same peculiarities have been observed, in an inferior degree, upon the higher ranges of the Alleghany mountains, and in many other elevated situations, where, far above the dust and mists of the lower world, celestial objects are seen with a clearer eye, as well as through a more transparent medium.

In this region, the traveller from the north is also at liberty to gaze, as it were, upon an unknown firmament, contemplating stars that he has never before been permitted to see. The scattered Nebulæ in the vast expanse above—the grouping of stars of the first magnitude, and the opening of new constellations to the view, invest with a peculiar interest the first view of the southern sky. The great Humboldt observed it with deep emotion, and described it, as one appropriately affected by its novel beauty. Other voyagers have done the same, till the impression has become almost universal, among those who have not “crossed the line,” that the southern constellations are, in themselves, more brilliant, and more beautifully grouped, than those of the northern.

hemisphere. In prose and poetry alike, this illusion has been often sanctioned by the testimony of great names. But it is an illusion still, to be accounted for only by the natural effect of *novelty* upon a sensitive mind, and an ardent imagination. The denizen of the south is equally affected by the superior wonders of the northern sky, and expatiates with poetic rapture upon the glories which, having become familiar to our eyes, are less admired than they should be.

If any exception should be made to the above remarks, it should be only with reference to the Southern Cross, which, regarded with a somewhat superstitious veneration by the inhabitants of these beautiful regions, as an emblem of their faith, is seen in all its glory, shedding its soft, rich light upon the rolling spheres, elevating the thoughts and affections of the heart, and leading the soul far beyond those brilliant orbs of the material heavens, to the contemplation of that "Hope, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

It would be an easy task to enlarge upon the wonders of the sky, but how shall man describe the works of HIM "who maketh Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and *the Chambers of the South?*"

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE ISLAND OF CUBA, ITS CITIES, TOWNS, RESOURCES, GOVERNMENT, ETC.

ITS political importance.—Coveted by the Nations.—National Robbery and Injustice.—Climate of Cuba.—Its Forests and Fruits.—Its great staples, Sugar and Coffee.—Copper mines.—Population.—Extent and surface.—Principal cities.—Matanzas.—Cardenas.—Puerto del Principe.—Santiago de Cuba.—Bayamo.—Trinidad de Cuba.—Espiritu Santo.—Government of the Island.—Count Villa Nueva.—Character and Services of Tacon.—Commerce of Cuba.—Relations to the United States.—Our causes of complaint.—The true interests of Cuba.—State of Education.—Discovery and early history of the Island.

CUBA is the largest, richest, most flourishing, and most important of the West India Islands. In a political point of view, its importance cannot be rated too high. Its geographical position, its immense resources, the peculiar situation, impregnable strength, and capacious harbor of its capital, give to it the complete command of the whole Gulf of Mexico, to which it is the key. It is certainly an anomaly in the political history of the world, that so weak a power as that of Spain, should be allowed to hold so important a post, by the all-grasp-

ing, ambitious thrones of Europe—to say nothing of the United States, where decided symptoms of relationship to old England begin to appear. It has often been found easy, where no just cause of quarrel exists, to make one; and it is a matter of marvel that the same profound wisdom and far-reaching benevolence, that found means to justify an aggressive war upon China, because, in the simplicity of her semi-barbarism, she would not consent to have the untold millions of her children drugged to death with English opium—cannot now make slavery, or the slave trade, or piracy, or something else of the kind, a divinely sanctioned apology for pouncing upon Cuba. That she has long coveted it, and often laid plots to secure it, there is no doubt. That it would be the richest jewel in her crown, and help greatly to lessen the enormous burdens under which her tax-ridden population is groaning, there can be no question. But, the science of politics is deep and full of mysteries. It has many problems which even time cannot solve.

And then, as to these United States—how conveniently might Cuba be annexed! How nicely it would hook on to the spoon-bill of Florida, and protect the passage to our southern metropolis, and the trade of the Gulf. We can claim it by an excellent logic, on the ground that it was once bound closely to Florida, the celebrated de Soto being governor of both; and Spain had no more right to separate them, in the sale and cession of Florida, than she or her provinces had, afterwards, to separate Texas from Louisiana. It is a good principle in national politics, to take an ell where an inch is given, especially when the giver is too weak to resist

the encroachment—and it has been so often practised upon, that there is scarcely a nation on earth that can consistently gainsay it. The annexation fever is up now, and I suggest the propriety of taking all we intend to, or all we want, at a sweep—lest the people should grow conscientious, and conclude to respect the rights of their weaker neighbors.

But, to be serious, let us take warning from the past, and learn to be just, and moderate, in order that we may be prosperous and happy. The epitaph of more than one of the republics of antiquity, might be written thus—*ruit sua mole*.

Much as has been said, and that with great justice and propriety, of the delightful climate of Cuba, it is subject to no inconsiderable changes, and the invalid, who resorts thither in quest of health, must be on his guard against those changes. The “wet northers,” that sometimes sweep down upon the coast, are often quite too severe for a delicate constitution to bear; and a retreat to the interior becomes necessary. During the prevalence of these winds, the southern side of the island is the favorite resort. Fortunately, these chilly visitors are few and far between, seldom continuing more than three or four days, with as many hours of rain. In the absence of these, the climate is as perfect as heart can desire, resembling, for the most part, that of the south of France.

Notwithstanding the large tracts of cultivated plantations and farms, which make this beautiful island a perfect garden, it has extensive forests of great beauty and value. The palm, whether found in clusters or alone, is always a magnificent tree, and is useful for a

variety of purposes—its trunk for building, its leaves for thatching, and several kinds of convenient manufactures, and its seeds for food. Mahogany abounds in some parts, and other kinds of hard wood suitable for ship building, a business which has been carried on very extensively in the island. The vine attains to a luxuriant growth, so as often to destroy the largest trees in its parasitical embrace. The orange and the pine-apple, both of a delicious flavor, abound on all sides. Indian corn, the sweet potatoe, rice, and a great variety of other important edibles are extensively cultivated, giving wealth to some, and sustenance to thousands.

The great staples of Cuba, however, and the principle sources of her immense wealth, are sugar and coffee. These are produced in the greatest abundance. The annual exports amount to about six hundred and fifty millions pounds of sugar, and eighty-four millions of coffee. The exports of tobacco are about ten millions pounds in the leaf, besides three hundred and ten millions of manufactured cigars. There are also large exports of molasses, honey, wax, etc.

There are copper mines of great value in the south east part of the island, in the neighborhood of Santiago. They were worked a long time, but for some reason were abandoned for more than a century. More recently they have been re-opened, and are now esteemed the richest copper mines in the world. They are worked principally by an English company, and the ore is sent to England to be smelted. The annual amount is not far from a million and a half of quintals.

The whole population of Cuba is estimated at a little over a million, 420,000 whites, 440,000 slaves, and

150,000 free colored persons. The annual revenue of the island, obtained from heavy taxes upon the sales of every species of property, and from duties export as well as import, is twelve millions of dollars. This is all drawn from its 420,000 whites, averaging nearly thirty dollars a head. Of this amount, but very little is expended in the island, except for the purpose of holding the people in subjection. Four millions go into the coffers of the mother country.

The island of Cuba is nearly eight hundred miles in length, from east to west, varying in breadth from twenty-five to one hundred and thirty miles. Its coast is very irregular, deeply indented with bays and inlets, and surrounded with numerous islands and reefs, making a difficult and dangerous navigation. It has many excellent harbors, that of Havana being, as has already been said, one of the best in the world. A range of mountains, rising into the region of perpetual barrenness, traverses the entire length of the island, dividing it into two unequal parts, the area of the southern portion being rather the larger of the two. There are also many other isolated mountain peaks and lofty hills, in different parts of the island, some of them beautifully wooded to their very summits, and others craggy, barren, precipitous, and full of dark caverns and frightful ravines.

The principal places, after Havana, are Matanzas, Cardenas, Puerto del Principe, Santiago, St. Salvador, Trinidad, and Espiritu Santo. Besides these there are some half a dozen smaller cities, twelve considerable towns, and about two hundred villages. The principal seaports are all strongly fortified.

Matanzas is situated on the northern shore, about sixty miles east of the capital. It contains, including its suburbs, about twenty thousand inhabitants, of whom rather more than half are whites, and about one sixth are free blacks. It commands the resources of a rich and extensive valley, and its exports of coffee, sugar, and molasses, are very large. The bay of Matanzas is deep and broad, and is defended by the castle of San Severino. The harbor at the head of this bay, is curiously protected against the swell of the sea, during the prevalence of the north-east winds, by a ledge of rocks extending nearly across it, leaving a narrow channel on each side, for the admission of vessels. The city is built upon a low point of land between two small rivers, which empty themselves into the bay, and from which so heavy a deposit of mud has been made, as materially to lessen the capacity of the harbor. The anchorage ground for vessels is, consequently, about half a mile from the shore, and cargoes are discharged and received by means of lighters.

Cardenas is comparatively a new place, the first settlement having been made less than twenty years ago. It now numbers about two thousand inhabitants. It is finely situated at the head of a beautiful bay, fifty miles eastward of Matanzas. This bay was once a famous resort for pirates, who, secure from observation, or winked at by the well-feed officials, brought in the vessels they had seized, drove them ashore on the rocks, and then claimed their cargoes as wreckers, the murdered crews not being able to claim even a salvage for their rightful owners. In the exhibition of scenes like this, the bay of Cardenas was not alone, or singular.

Many an over-hanging cliff, and dark inlet of that blood-stained shore, could tell a similar tale.

The rail-road from this place to Bemba, eighteen miles distant, passes through a beautiful tract of country, and affords to the traveller a view of some of the most picturesque scenery that is to be found in the island.

Owing to its fine harbor, and its facilities of communication with the rich tract of country lying behind it, this place will become a formidable rival to Matanzas, when its port shall be thrown open to foreign commerce. At present, there is no custom house here, and all the produce is transported in lighters to Matanzas or Havana, to be sold. It has not depth of water for the largest class of vessels, but the greater part of those usually employed in the West India trade, can be well accommodated.

Puerto del Principe, situated in the interior of the island, about midway between its northern and southern shores, and more than four hundred miles eastward from Havana, contains a population of twenty-four thousand—fourteen thousand being whites, and about six thousand slaves. This district is celebrated for the excellent flavor of its cigars. It is a place of considerable importance, and the residence of a lieutenant-governor.

Santiago de Cuba, is on the southern coast, about one hundred miles from the eastern extremity of the island, and nearly seven hundred south-east of Havana. Its population is twenty-five thousand, of whom nearly ten thousand are whites, and eight thousand slaves. It has a fine, capacious harbor, scarcely second to that of

Havana, and strongly defended by a castle, and several inferior batteries. It has a large trade in sugar, coffee, and molasses. About twelve miles from the city, westward, is the town of Santiago del Prade, near which the rich copper mines, before mentioned, are situated, giving employment in one way or another, to nearly all of its two thousand inhabitants.

Bayamo, or St. Salvador,—sixty miles west of Santiago, numbers nearly ten thousand souls. Manzanilla, thirty miles south from this, has three thousand.

Trinidad de Cuba, two hundred miles further west, and about two hundred and fifty from Havana, has a population of thirteen thousand, of whom six thousand are whites, and four thousand five hundred, free colored.

Espiritu Santo, thirty-five miles eastward from Trinidad, has less than ten thousand inhabitants in the city, and thirty-four thousand in the whole district, of whom twenty-two thousand are whites, a very unusual proportion in these islands.

In their general features, in the style of the buildings, in the character of the people, their occupations, modes of living, customs of society, etc., etc., all these places bear a close resemblance to each other, varying only in location, and the lay of the land, and the forms of the rivers and bays about them.

The government of Cuba is a military despotism, whose edicts are enforced by an armed body of more than twelve thousand soldiers. The Captain General is appointed by the crown of Spain, and is a kind of vice-roy, exercising the functions of commander-in-chief of the army, Governor of the western province of the island, President of the provincial assembly, etc. The

present incumbent, Don Leopold O'Donnell, enjoys a great share of popularity. He holds no civil jurisdiction over the eastern province, of which Santiago is the capital. The governor of that province is entirely independent of the Captain General, except in military matters, and is amenable only to the court of Madrid.

The Intendente, Count Villa Nueva, recently re-instated in that office, is said to be very desirous to ameliorate the burdens of the planting interest; and in his efforts to secure this result, he has evinced the good sense and prudence, which are usually followed with success. His integrity and talents, together with the fact that he is the only "native" who was ever exalted to high official rank, have secured for him the unbounded confidence and affection of the people. His power is distinct from that of the Governor, and is in no way dependent upon it. He exercises certain legal rights, such as the entire control of the imports and exports, and is, in fact, the sole manager of all the financial concerns of the colony. By this arrangement, the purse and the sword are entirely separated, and the dangers to be apprehended from the abuse of power, greatly diminished.

No attempt to illustrate the position, resources, and character of Cuba, at the present time, would do justice to its subject, or to the feelings of its author, without an honorable and grateful mention of the name of Tacon. And no one who has visited the island, or who feels any interest in its welfare, or any regard for the lives and fortunes of those who hold commercial intercourse with its inhabitants, can withhold from the memory of that truly great and good man, the well-earned tribute of

admiration and gratitude. He was a rare example of wisdom and benevolence, firmness and moderation, and seems to have been raised up by Providence, and qualified for the peculiar exigency of his time. He has, no doubt, been eminently useful in other stations in his native land; else he would never have been known to his monarch, as fitted for the difficult task assigned him here. But, if he had never acted any other part on the stage of life—if the term of his public and private usefulness had been limited to the brief period of his chief magistracy in Cuba, he had won a fame nobler than that of princes, fairer, worthier, and more enduring than that of the proudest conquerors earth ever saw. The memorial of such a man can never be found in marble, or in epitaph. It is written in the prosperity of a people, and of the nations with whom they hold commercial intercourse. It lives, and should for ever live, in the gratitude, admiration and reverence of mankind.

When General Tacon was appointed Governor General of Cuba, Havana was literally a den of thieves, a nursery of the foulest crimes, a school where the blackest conceptions of which the human heart is capable, and the most diabolical inventions of mischief, were not only seen to escape punishment, but were officially tolerated and encouraged. A spirit of venality and almost incredible corruption prevailed in the judicial and financial departments; and the subaltern magistrates, if not actual partakers, by receiving their share of the booty, connived at every variety of robbery and plunder. No natural or civil rights were regarded—no one's life or property was held sacred. Murders in the open street, and under the broad blaze

of a sunlit sky, were fearlessly committed ; slaves and pirates unblushingly perambulated the streets, discussing their fiendish machinations, and perpetrating deeds of darkness, over which humanity should weep. Specie transported from one part of the city to another, required the protection of an armed force. Such was the aspect, and such the lamentable state of affairs, both public and private, in Havana, at the time that Tacon came into power. The measures adopted by him for the introduction of order and the purification of the whole political system, were no less wise and judicious, than his fearlessness, promptness and perseverance in enforcing them, were deserving of the highest commendation. His labors were truly Herculean, and his success in cleansing this Augean stable most signal.

During his elevation to power, which continued four years, the aspect of things in Havana was completely changed. Order supplanted confusion, and wholesome authority succeeded to anarchy and misrule. Individuals became secure in the possession of life and property ; strangers and foreigners no longer felt themselves surrounded by lawless bandits, and compelled, by the absence of law, order and discipline, to take the law into their own hands, or abandon, at the first appearance of violence, the protection of their rights, property and life. The man who formerly walked abroad in Havana, was forced to feel, and to act accordingly : that "his hand was against every man, and every man's against him."

This Solon of Cuba was the originator and promoter of most of the principal improvements which now adorn the city and surrounding country, many of

which bear his name. This bloodless revolution was accomplished without any additional public expense or burdensome tax upon the people, by a wise administration and righteous application of the ordinary resources of the government. Such, and more, were the blessings bestowed upon Cuba by Tacon. Such are the glorious results of the public career of one whose highest ambition and whose proudest aim seemed to be, the elevation of his countrymen—the welfare, security and happiness of mankind. As we honor and revere the names of Washington and La Fayette, so should the dwellers on that island ever love and cherish the name of the illustrious Tacon. At the expiration of four years, he voluntarily retired to Spain, and was succeeded in the government by General Espeleta. “May the shadow of Tacon never be less;” or, as they say in his own native tongue, “*viva usted muchos años.*”

The commerce of Cuba is with the world; yet its importance as a trading mart is chiefly realized by its nearest neighbor, the United States. Its annual imports and exports, which nearly balance each other, amount to about twenty-five millions of dollars each. Of the imports, during the last year, which may be taken as a fair average, it received five millions two hundred and forty thousand dollars, or more than one-fifth, from the United States. Of the exports, during the same period, we received nine millions nine hundred and thirty thousand dollars, within a fraction of two-fifths. In addition to this, its commerce with the different ports of Europe, South America, and other parts of the world, furnished profitable freights to a large number of our

carrying ships, and employment to our hardy seamen. We are in duty bound, therefore, to regard this miniature continent, hanging on our southern border, with a favorable eye, and to cultivate with it the most neighborly relations.

It is true, we have had some cause of complaint in our intercourse hitherto, and we may not soon look for its entire removal. The imposts upon our productions are severe and disproportionate, the port-charges onerous, and the incidental exactions unreasonable and vexatious. We are often subjected to frivolous delays, and unjust impositions, in the adjustment of difficulties at the custom house, and in the recovery of debts in the courts of law. We have also, in times past, been severe sufferers from the depredations of well known and almost licensed pirates, who, in open day, and under the walls of the castle, have plundered our property, and butchered our seamen. Still, with all the offsets which the most ingenious grumbler could array, we owe much to the "Queen of the Antilles," and *might* have more occasion for regret, than for gratulation, should she ever be transferred to the crown of England, or annexed to the territories of the United States. If her people were prepared for self-government—if the incongruous elements of society there could, by any possibility, amalgamate and harmonize, the establishment of an independent government would doubtless promote her own happiness, and benefit us and the world. The luxuriant plains, and valleys, and hill-sides of this beautiful isle, have capacities amply sufficient to sustain a population ten times as large as that which it now contains. Burdened, and almost crushed under the weight of

their own taxes, ruled with a rod of iron, and held in almost slavish subjection by the bristling bayonets of a mercenary foreign soldiery, who, under the pretence of defending them from invasion or insurrection, eat out their substance, and rivet their chains—the million who now reside there, with the exception of a few overgrown estates among the planters and merchants, find, for the most part, a miserable subsistence. There is probably no class of people in any portion of the United States, so miserably poor and degraded, as the mass of the Monteros and free blacks of Cuba. Give them a fostering government, and free institutions, educate them, make men of them, and throw wide open to all the avenues to comfort, wealth and distinction—and there is no spot on the face of the globe that would sustain a denser population than this.

The exports from the United States to Cuba consist of lumber of various kinds, codfish, rice, bacon, lard, candles, butter, cheese. The first two articles are almost exclusively from the Northern States, the third from the Southern, the remainder from all. The imports hence are of all the productions of the island.

The cause of education in this lovely land is lamentably low. In the large cities and towns, respectable provision is made for the wants of the young in this respect. The Royal University at Havana, embracing among its advantages, schools of medicine and law, offers very considerable facilities to the industrious student. There are also several other lesser institutions in the city, with schools, public and private, for teaching the elementary branches of a common education. Some of these are tolerably well sustained; but the

range they afford, and the talent they command, is comparatively so limited, that most of those who are able to bear the expense, prefer sending their sons to the United States or Europe, to complete their education.

No other place in the island is so well provided in this respect as the capital. Arrangements are made, in most of the towns and interior districts, for gratuitous instruction. In some cases, this provision is wholly inadequate. In others, it is regarded with indifference by the class for whose benefit it is designed. Their abject poverty and destitution of the common comforts of life, seems to cramp all their energies, and dishearten them from any attempt to better the condition of their children. And, indeed, under their present civil and political institutions, but few advances could be made, even if the people were ambitious to improve. For the government, like all despotisms, is jealous of the intelligence of its subjects, well knowing that a reading, thinking people must and will be free.

Cuba was the fifth of the great discoveries of Columbus, and by far the most important of the islands he visited. San Salvador, Conception, Exuma and Isabella, which he had already seen and named, were comparatively small and of little note, though so rich and beautiful, that they seemed to the delighted imagination of the discoverer, the archipelago of Paradise, or the "islands of the blest." It is very remarkable, that, though he skirted the whole of the southern, and more than half the northern coast of Cuba, following its windings and indentations more than twelve hundred miles, till he was fully convinced that it was a

part of a great continent, and not an island ; yet he made no attempt to occupy it, or to plant a colony there. It was not even visited during his life-time, and he died in the full conviction that it was not an island. He gave it the name of Juana, in honor of the young prince John, heir to the crowns of Castile and Leon. It afterwards received the name of Fernandina, by order of the king in whose name it was occupied and held. But the original designation of the natives finally prevailed over both the Spanish ones, which were long since laid aside. It is understood to be derived from the Indian name of a tree, which abounded in the island.

In 1511, about five years after the death of Columbus, his son and successor, Diego, in the hope of obtaining large quantities of gold, which was then growing scarce in Hispaniola, sent Don Diego Velasquez, an experienced and able commander, of high rank and fortune, to take possession of Cuba. Panfilo de Narvaez was the second in command in this expedition. The names of both these knights are conspicuous in the subsequent history of Spanish discovery and conquest, in the islands, and on the continent, but more especially in their relation to Cortes, the great conqueror of Mexico.

The inhabitants of Cuba, like those of Hispaniola, and some of the other islands, were a peaceful effeminate race, having no knowledge of the arts of war, and fearing and reverencing the Spaniards as a superior race of beings descended from above. They submitted, without opposition, to the yoke imposed upon them. It was for the most part, a bloodless conquest, yielding

few laurels to the proud spirits who conducted it, but rich in the spoils of spiritual warfare to the kind-hearted and devoted Las Casas, subsequently Bishop of Chiapa, who accompanied the army in all its marches, the messenger of peace and salvation to the subjugated indians. According to the record of this good father, the indefatigable missionary of the cross, only one chief residing on the eastern part of the island, offered any resistance to the invaders; and *he* was not a native, but an emigrant from Hispaniola, whence he had recently escaped, with a few followers, from the cruel oppression of their new masters, to find repose on the peaceful shores of Cuba. Alarmed and excited by the appearance of the Spanish ships approaching his new found retreat, Hatuey called his men together, and in an eloquent and animated speech, urged them to a desperate resistance, in defence of their homes and their liberty. With scornful irony, he assured them that they would not be able successfully to defend themselves, if they did not first propitiate the god of their enemies. "Behold him here," said he, pointing to a vessel filled with gold, "behold the mighty divinity, whom the white man adores, in whose service he ravages our country, enslaves us, our wives and our children, and destroys our lives at his pleasure. Behold the god of your cruel enemies, and invoke his aid to resist them." After some slight ceremonies of invocation, in imitation of the rites of Christian worship, which they had learned from their oppressors, they cast the gold into the sea, that the Spaniards might not quarrel about it, and prepared for their defence. They fought desperately, resolved rather to die in battle, than

submit to the cruel domination of the invaders. They were nearly all destroyed. The Cacique Hatuey was taken prisoner, and condemned to be burned alive, in order to strike terror into the minds of the other chiefs and their people. In vain did the benevolent missionary protest against the cruel, unchristian sacrifice. He labored diligently to convert the poor cacique to the Christian faith, urging him most affectionately to receive baptism, as the indispensable requisite for admission to heaven. His reply is one of the most eloquent and bitterly taunting invectives on record. Enquiring if the white men would go to heaven, and being answered in the affirmative, he replied—"then I will not be a christian, for I would not willingly go where I should find men so cruel." He then met his death with heroic fortitude, or rather with that stoical indifference, which is a common characteristic of the aborigines of America; preferring even a death of torture to a life of servitude, especially under the hated Spaniards, who had shown themselves as incapable of gratitude, as they were destitute of pity, and the most common principles of justice.

The army met with no further opposition. The whole island submitted quietly to their sway, and the unresisting inhabitants toiled, and died, and wasted away under the withering hand of oppression. It is probable, from all accounts, that the population, at the time of the conquest, was nearly, if not quite as great, as it is at the present time; though some of the Spanish chroniclers, to cover the cruelty of so dreadful a sacrifice, greatly reduce the estimate. Whatever were their numbers, however, they disappeared like flowers before the chilling blasts of winter. Unaccustomed to any

kind of labor, they fainted under the heavy exactions of their cruel and avaricious task-masters. Diseases, hitherto unknown among them, were introduced by their intercourse with the strangers; and, in a few years, their fair and beautiful inheritance was depopulated, and left to the undisputed possession of the merciless intruders.

In four years after the subjugation, Velasques had laid the foundation of seven cities, the sites of which were so well selected, that they still remain the principal places in the colony, with the exception of Havana, which was originally located on the southern shore, near Batabano, but afterwards abandoned on account of its supposed unhealthiness. Its present site, then called the port of Carenas, was selected and occupied in 1519.

So much has been said of the impregnable strength of Havana, that I shall venture, at some risk of repetition, as well of being out of place with my remarks, to say a few words more on that point. The position of the Moro, the Cabañas, and the fortress on the opposite eminence, has been sufficiently illustrated. I know not that any thing could be added to these fortifications, to make them more perfect, in any respect, than they are. They confer upon Havana a just claim to be called, as it has been, "The Gibraltar of America." In effecting this, nature has combined with art, in a beautiful and masterly manner, so that the stranger is struck, at the first glance, with the immense strength of the place, and the thought of surprising or storming it, would seem to be little short of madness.

But let it be remembered that the *impregnable* Gib-

altar was successfully attacked, and is now in possession of the conquerors. The *inaccessible* heights of Abraham were scaled in a night, and Quebec still remains to show what seeming impossibilities courage and skill united can achieve.

With the exception of the Moro, all the great fortifications at Havana, are of comparatively recent construction. They have been erected since the memorable siege of 1762, when, after one of the most desperate and sanguinary conflicts on record, the English fleet and army succeeded in capturing the city. The Spaniards say, that the final and successful sortie was made in the afternoon, while their generals was taking their *siesta*—a cover for the shame of defeat, about as transparent as that of the Roman sentinels at the tomb of Christ, whom the wily priests induced to declare, that “his disciples stole him away while they slept.” There is no question, however, that, notwithstanding the great strength of this place, and its entire safety from any attack by sea, it could be assailed with effect, by the landing of efficient forces in the rear, in the same manner as these other places, just mentioned, were taken, and as the French have recently succeeded in capturing Algiers.

CHAPTER V.

DEPARTURE FROM HAVANA.—THE GULF OF MEXICO.—ARRIVAL AT VERA CRUZ.

THE Steamer Dee.—Running down the coast.—Beautiful scenery.—Associations awakened by it.—Columbus.—The scenes of his glorious achievements.—The island groups.—The shores of the continent.—“The Columbian sea.”—Disappointments and sufferings, the common inheritance of genius.—Cervantes, Hylander, Camoens, Tasso.—These waters rich in historical incidents.—Revolutions.—Arrival at Vera Cruz.—The Peak of Orizaba.—Description of Vera Cruz.—Churches.—The Port.—San Juan de Ulloa.—Scarcity of Water.—The suburbs.—Population.—Yellow Fever.

THE British Royal mail steamer *Dee*, arriving at Havana on one of her regular circuits, presented a very favorable opportunity to gratify a disposition for change. Accordingly, on the 10th of February, I embarked on board of her, with the intention of touching at Vera Cruz, and thence proceeding to Tampico, and such other interesting points as my time and health would allow.

The “*Dee*” is one of a Line of Steamers, built by a company in London, to carry the mails, which are placed in charge of an officer, acting under the direc-

tion of the British government. This company receives from the government, two hundred and fifty thousand pounds annually. The vessels average about one thousand tons each, and are so built as to be readily altered into men-of-war, should they be required to strengthen the English naval power. The *Dee* consumes about thirty-five tons of coal per day. Her average speed, however, under the most favorable circumstances, does not exceed eight and a half knots an hour. She is commanded by a sailing master of the British navy, whose salary is about fifteen hundred dollars per annum. She has been in service only two years, but has the appearance of being a much older vessel; a circumstance caused no doubt by the "retrenchments" consequent upon the unlimited extravagance of the company's first outfit. Her so-called "accommodations" were very inferior, and the table was miserably furnished, but the service of plate, emblazoned with heraldic designs, was, unquestionably, beautiful.

We steamed out of the harbor at sunrise, the ever wakeful *Moro* looking sternly down upon us as we passed under its frowning battlements; and, being favored with delightful weather, skirted the coast as far as we could, and took our departure from Cape Antonio.

Nothing can exceed the beauty and sublimity of the natural scenery thus presented to our view, between Havana and the point of the Cape. The broad rich plains, the gentle slopes, the luxuriant swells, the hills clothed with verdure to their very crowns, the lofty mountains with their abrupt and craggy prominences and ever changing forms, make up a landscape of the richest and rarest kind, beautiful in all its parts, and

exceedingly picturesque in its general effect. The hills, with highly cultivated plantations, extending from the lovely valleys below, in beautiful order and luxuriance, far up towards their forest-crowned summits, looked green and inviting, as if full of cool grottos and shady retreats; while the far-off mountains where

“Distance lent enchantment to the view,”

seemed traversed with dark ravines and gloomy caverns, fit abodes for those hordes of merciless banditti, whose predatory achievements have given to the shores and mountain passes of Cuba, an unenviable pre-eminence in outlawry.

The motion of our oaken leviathan, sweeping heavily along through the quiet sea, created a long, low swell, which, like a miniature tide, rose gently upon the resounding shore, washing its moss-covered bank, and momentarily disturbing the echoes that lingered in its voiceless caves. It was painful to feel that I was leaving those beautiful shores, never, in all probability, to revisit them. A gloomy feeling took possession of my soul, as if parting again, and for ever, from the shores of my early home. Then came up, thronging upon the memory and the fancy, a multitude of historical associations, suggested by the land before me, and the sea on whose bosom I was borne—associations of the most thrilling and painful interest, and yet so wonderfully arrayed in the gorgeous drapery of romance, that I would not, if I could, dismiss them.

Albeit, then, I may be in imminent danger of running into vain repetitions, in giving indulgence to the melancholy humor of the hour, I cannot refrain from follow-

ing out, in this place, where a clear sky and an open sea leave me no better employment, some of those reflections, which, if indulged in at all, might, perhaps, with equal appropriateness have found a place in one of the previous chapters. With Cuba, one of the earliest, and the most important of the great discoveries of Columbus, behind me—the shores of Central America, the scene of his last and greatest labors in the cause of science, before me—and the wide expanse of sea, which witnessed all his toils, and sufferings, around me on every side—how could I do otherwise than recall to mind all that he had accomplished, and all that he had endured, in this region of his wonderful adventures! Here was the grand arena of his more than heroic victories, the theatre of his proud triumph over the two great obstacles, which, in all ages have opposed the march of mind—the obstinate bigotry of the ignorant, and the still more obstinate ignorance of the learned.

Behind me, far away toward the rising sun, was the little island of San Salvador, where the New World, in all its elysian beauty, its virgin loveliness, burst upon his view. Conception, Fernandina, and Isabella, the bright enchanting beacons rising out of the bosom of the deep, to guide his eager prow to Cuba, the “Queen of the Antilles,” were there too, slumbering on the outer verge of the coral beds of the Bahamas. Nearer, and full in view, its mountain peaks towering to the skies, and stretching its long arm nearly three hundred leagues away toward the south-east, lay the beautiful island I had just left, the richest jewel of the ocean, the brightest gem in the crown of Spain. Farther on in the same direction, and dimly descried from the eastern

promontories of Cuba, were the lofty peaks of St. Domingo, beautifully flanked by Porto Rico on the right, and Jamaica on the left. Then, farther still, sweeping in a graceful curve toward the outermost angle of the Southern continent, and completing the emerald chain, which nature has so beautifully thrown across the broad chasm that divides the eastern shores of the two Americas, lay the windward cluster of the Caribbean islands, terminating with Trinidad, in the very bosom of the Gulf of Paria. Returning westward, along the coast of Paria, where Columbus first actually saw the continent, and traversing the whole extent of the Caribbean Sea, you might reach the shores of Honduras, where he again touched the shores of the continent, and finished, amid the infirmities of age, and the sufferings consequent upon a life of toil, hardship and exposure, his great achievement of discovery, his career of usefulness and glory.

Coming northward, toward the point whither we were then tending, and rounding Cape Catoche into the Gulf of Mexico, you would behold the true Eldorado which they all sought for, and which the brave Cortes afterwards found—the golden mountains and golden cities of Anahuac. Northward still, some two hundred leagues, the “Father of rivers” pours his mighty current into the bosom of the Gulf, after watering and draining the richest and broadest valleys in the world, and linking together, by its various and extended branches, the mighty fraternity of republics, spread over the vast territories of the North.

I pity the man, whoever he may be, and of whatever nation, who can visit these islands, or traverse these seas, for the first time, without feeling as if he were

treading on enchanted ground. Every country, every sea has its peculiar history, and its peculiar associations. There is much to interest the heart, and inflame the imagination in the dark legends of the Indian archipelago—in the classic memories and time-hallowed monuments of the “Isles of Greece,” and of the shores and bays, the mountains and streams of all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean—in the rock-bound coast of the North Sea—in the basaltic columns and gigantic caverns of the Emerald Isle;—but they do not, in my view, either or all of them, surpass, in the deep interest and moral grandeur of the associations they awaken, the shores that then surrounded me—the American Isthmus, and the American archipelago.

The American archipelago!—the Mediterranean of the Western World, with its beautiful clusters of magnificent islands—why not call it, as Bradford long ago suggested, THE COLUMBIAN SEA? Surely, if the Florentine merchant has been permitted to rob the great Genoese discoverer of the honor of conferring his own illustrious name upon the two vast continents, which his genius and perseverance brought to light, while the whole world has quietly sanctioned the larceny—we, who know the equity of his claims, and feel how shamefully he has been abused, might at least do him the tardy justice to affix his name, in perpetuo, to this sea, which, by universal acknowledgment, he was the first to traverse and explore—the scene of his glorious triumph over the narrow and ignorant prejudices of his day, as well as of his romantic adventures, toils and sufferings.

What must have been the emotions of Columbus

when he first traversed these waters, and beheld these lovely islands! For, even now, with the mind already prepared by the full and elaborate descriptions of geographers and travellers, they are beheld by the voyager, for the first time, with sensations of surprise and delight. The objects of wonder with which he and his crew were surrounded—the variation of the compass, the regularity of the winds, and other phenomena, of the existence of which they could not possibly have been apprised, must have been truly exciting. Think of his astonishment on landing, to find myriads of people, disposed to regard him and his adventurous crew, as beings of a superior order, whom they were almost ready to adore. And then, pray that the veil of oblivion may be thrown over the fiendish requital which, in after years, succeeded this hospitable reception.

It is any thing but agreeable to a generous heart, to witness or contemplate the strivings of a noble mind, with the cares and anxieties of life, having some magnificent project in view, but hindered from carrying it forward, by the stern demand of a starving household, or the want of that *golden* lever, which, with or without a place to stand upon, has power to move the world. With but few exceptions, it has ever been the case, that men of genius have struggled with adversity,—

Have felt the influence of malignant star,
And waged with fortune an eternal war.

Fortune seldom smiles upon the sons of science. Rarely, indeed, does she condescend to become the companion of genius. It was not until Columbus had touched the master passion of his royal patrons, that he could induce

them to grant him assistance. When he had convinced the king of the great pecuniary advantage to be derived to the crown from his enterprise, and the queen of the vast accessions to the holy church, in bringing new territories under her sway, and converting nations of heathen to the christian faith,—then, and not till then, did they consent to favor his expedition. Absorbed with their one idea of planting the standards of Castile and of the Cross on the marble palaces of the Alhambra, they had no time to consider, no treasure to sustain, such magnificent schemes of discovery. Should Columbus be succored, when Cervantes, suffered and hungered for bread? Was it not the cold treatment Cervantes received, that wrung from his subdued spirit the humiliating complaint, that “the greatest advantage which princes possess above other men, is that of being attended by servants as great as themselves?” But why should we seek out, dwell upon, and hold up to the execration of the world, these instances of royal littleness, injustice, and ingratitude, when the world is, and always has been, full of such exhibitions of human nature? Was not Hylander compelled to sell his notes on Dion Casseus for a *dinner*? Did not Camoens, the solitary pride of Portugal,—he who after his death was honored by the appellation of “*the great*,”—beg for bread? Has not a Tasso from the depths of his poverty, besought his cat to assist him with the lustre of her eyes, that he might pen his immortal verse? Yes,—and one simple story would tell the fate of a Homer, Ariosto, Dryden, Spenser, Le Sage, Milton, Sydenham, and a mighty host of others, who, after having spent their lives in the cause of letters, and of human advance-

ment and liberty, were neglected by their countrymen, and suffered to die in obscurity, if not in poverty and want!

The Columbian Sea! divided by the projecting peninsulæ of Yucatan and Florida, and the far-stretching walls of Cuba and Hispaniola, into two great sections, the Caribbean Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico—how full of interest, historical and romantic, how curious, how wonderful in many of the phenomena it exhibits! Here is the inexhaustible fountain head of that inexplicable mystery of nature, the Gulf Stream, which, without any visible adequate supply, throws its mighty current of calid water, thousands of miles across the cold Atlantic. Here European civilization, and European depotism first planted its foot in the elysian fields of the west. Here the dreadful work of subjugation, and extermination commenced a work, which, in three brief centuries, under the banners, too, of the Prince of Peace, and in the name of Christianity, has blotted from the face of the earth a mighty family of populous nations, some of them far advanced in civilization and refinement, leaving only here and there a scattered and almost exhausted tribe, bending under the yoke of slavery, or flying before the continual encroachments of the white man.

It is difficult to say to which quarter of this sea one should turn, in order to gather up the incidents and associations, which shall most deeply touch the heart, and excite the imagination. On the east, these beautiful, luxuriant islands, the first seen and visited, where the great, the noble, the generous-hearted discoverer was received as a god by the simple and hospitable natives,

and afterwards calumniated, oppressed, deserted by his friends, and left by his envious foes to pine a whole year on the shores of Jamaica, with no shelter but the wreck of his last vessel—where too he was shamefully imprisoned, and then sent home in chains, deprived of his honors and his rights. On the west, the golden regions of Mexico, where the Montezumas reigned with a degree of splendor rivalling the most brilliant dynasties of the Old World—where civilization, and the arts of refinement, were enjoyed to a degree unknown to many of the most powerful nations of antiquity—where pyramids, temples, and palaces, whose extent and magnificence might have vied with those of Egypt and Syria, still remain in ruins to attest the departed glory of the Astec races—and where the marvellous, the scarcely credible adventures of Cortes, and his little band of brave invaders, brought desolation and wo on all that sunny region. On the south, the great continent, the scene of similar adventures—the theatre of oppression, of civil discord, of revolution, of a perpetual struggle for power, but, it may be hoped, ere long of republican liberty. On the north—what shall I say—the fairest and best portion of the wide earth—the home of liberty—the home of our fathers—in a word, which contains a depth of meaning that belongs to no other in any language—home!

How wonderfully have these shores changed hands and masters, since the day when Columbus gave them all to Spain. What has she now left? The entire continent of South America, the golden regions of the Isthmus, the broad savannahs of Florida, and the boundless prairies of the great west, have all been

wrested from her iron and oppressive rule. And, of all that rich cluster of islands, that lie along the eastern boundary of this great sea—only Cuba and Porto Rico now acknowledge her sway. How bitterly the wrongs she inflicted upon the hapless natives of these fair lands, have recoiled upon her own head, and upon the heads of all her representatives in the New World. Scarcely for one moment have they held any of their ill-gotten possessions in peace. Revolt and revolution have swept over them in quick succession, like the Sirocco of the desert, burying millions of merciless oppressors in the same graves with the millions of the oppressed. Anarchy, confusion, bloodshed, and civil discord and commotion, have been the lot of their inheritance. And even to this day, except in the islands above named, wherever the Spanish race remains in the ascendancy, the seat of its power is, as it were, the crater of a volcano, where society, no less than the earth, heaves and groans and trembles with the throes of inward convulsion. Look yonder, as we near the shores of Mexico. Clouds of dust and smoke—the thunders of artillery, the falling of successive dynasties, mingle with the terrible din of the earthquake, and the sulphureous belchings of subterraneous fires, and send up their angry shouts, and voices of wailing to the skies, till the whole civilized world is disturbed by their incessant broils. How long shall it be? When shall this land have rest? When shall the curse of war, which has been laid upon it for so many centuries, be revoked? Heaven speed the day.

There are some features which have been noticed by voyagers, as peculiar to these waters. Whether they

do not belong to inland seas, and to bays and gulfs generally, my personal observation does not enable me to determine. The color of the water is a less decided blue than that of the ocean. This phenomenon I am at a loss to explain, having always supposed that the color of the sea was only the reflection of the azure depths of the sky, and that, consequently, in the clear atmosphere, and the deep blue heavens, of the tropics, it would show a deeper tinge of cerulean than elsewhere.

It is also remarked that there is seldom known here, the long equable swell, and gentle undulation, of the open ocean, but a short pitchy sea, which, in small craft, is very disagreeable, but is less noticeable in the larger class of vessels. The gulf is subject to periodical calms in the summer, and to violent gales from the north in the autumnal months. Of the Chapoté, or asphaltic ebullition on the surface of the sea, I shall speak more fully in another place, in connection with a similar phenomenon observed in the lakes of Mexico.

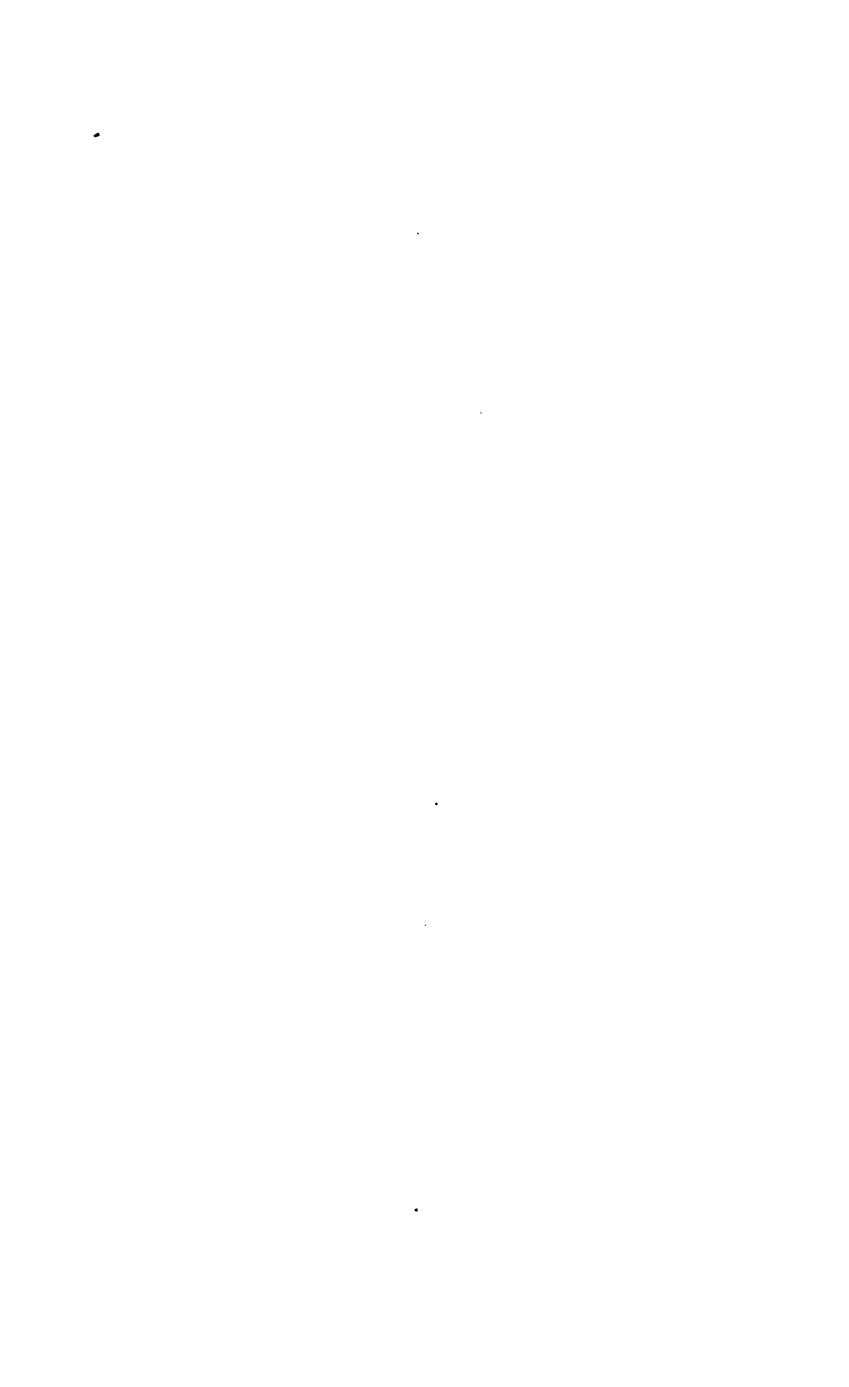
We arrived at Vera Cruz on the 15th of February. The voyage proved agreeable—especially to those of our party who were subject to sea-sickness, and who could therefore well appreciate their entire freedom from the unpalatable, and often ludicrous effects produced by the unceremonious movement of the waves, when uncontrolled by the irresistible agency of steam. Indeed, we all felt strongly convinced, that steam navigation is the *ne plus ultra* of travelling at sea.

Long before we made the land, the grand and lofty peak of Orizaba, with its spotless mantle of eternal snow, rearing its hoary head seventeen thousand feet



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above us, presented itself to our view. The highest ranges of the Alleghanies, and the lofty summits of the Catskill, of my own country, were familiar to my boyish days—but, I was little prepared to behold a scene like this—a scene which caused the wonders of my childhood to dwindle almost into nothing. Art, with all her charms, may, and often does, disappoint us—but Nature, never. The conception of Him who laid the foundations of the mountains, cannot be approached even by the most aspiring flight of the imagination.



CASTLE OF SAN JUAN DE ULLOA.

The first object that strikes the eye, in approaching Vera Cruz by water, is the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa, with the spires and domes of the churches peering up in the distance behind it. It stands alone, upon a small rocky island, on one side of the main entrance to the harbor, and only about half a mile from the wall of the city, and consequently has complete command of the port. The entrance on the other side, is so barred with

broken reefs and ledges, that it can only be used by small craft in favorable weather.

The Castle is circular, strongly built, and heavily mounted. Its principal strength, however, is in its position, inaccessible except by water, and its guns pointing every way, leave no side open to the attack of an enemy. It has never been reduced but once, and then its natural ally, the city, was against it. The sea was in the hands of its enemies, and all communication with the outer world was cut off. It held out bravely while its provisions lasted, and then yielded to famine, and not to arms. This was in 1829, during the last dying struggles of Spain to hold on to her revolted provinces in Central America.

Our pilot brought us to anchor in the harbor, or roadstead, under the walls of this celebrated old castle, and within a few rods of the landing. An unexpected visit from a "Norther," gave me an opportunity which would not otherwise have presented itself, of paying my respects to the town.

"Vera Cruz Triunfante," the Heroic City, as it is styled in all public documents, in consequence of the prowess of its citizens in taking the Castle San Juan de Ulloa, which, as above stated, surrendered from starvation, lies in a low, sandy shore; and, like all American Spanish towns, has few attractions for the stranger, either in its general appearance, or in the style of its architecture. The town is laid out with great regularity. The streets are broad and straight, at right angles with each other, and are well paved, which, unfortunately, is more than can be said of many of the paved cities in the United States. The side-walks are

covered with cement, and are altogether superior to those of Havana. The houses are generally well constructed to suit the climate. Many of them are large, some three stories high, built in the old Spanish or Moorish style, and generally enclosing a square courtyard, with covered galleries. They have flat roofs, and parti-colored awnings, displaying beneath the latter a profusion of flowers.

The best view of Vera Cruz is from the water. There are, within and outside the walls, seventeen church establishments, the domes or cupolas of which may be seen in approaching it from that direction, with quite an imposing effect. The port is easy of access, but very insecure, being open to the north, and consequently subject to the terrible "northers," which, in more senses than one, during the winter season, prove a scourge to this coast. It is well defended by a strong fort, situated on a rock of the island of St. Juan de Ulloa, about half a mile distant. The name of this island, and the castle upon it, are associated with some of the most terrible scenes of blood and cruelty, that have given to the many revolutionary struggles of that ill-fated country, an unenviable pre-eminence of horror.

The form of the city is semi-circular, fronting the sea. It is situated on an arid plain, surrounded by sand hills, and is very badly supplied with water,—the chief reliance being upon rain collected in cisterns, which are often so poorly constructed as to answer but very little purpose. The chief resource of the lower classes, is the water of a ditch, so impure as frequently to occasion disease. An attempt was made, more than a cen-

ture ago, to remedy this evil, by the construction of a stone aqueduct from the river Xamapa; but, unfortunately, after a very large sum had been expended on the work, it was discovered that the engineer who projected it, had committed a fatal mistake, in not ascertaining the true level, and the work was abandoned in despair.

The outside of the city looks solitary and miserable enough. The ruins of deserted dwelling houses, dilapidated public edifices, neglected agriculture, and streets, once populous and busy, now still and overgrown with weeds, give an air of melancholy to the scene, which it is absolutely distressing to look upon, and which the drillings of the soldiery, and "all the pomp and circumstance" of warlike parade, were insufficient to dispel.

The population of this place is now about six thousand. In 1842, two thousand died of black vomit, the greater portion of whom were the poor, half-enslaved Indians, brought from their healthy mountain homes, to serve as soldiers on the deadly coast. This dreadful scourge made its appearance on the continent of America, in 1699, where it was introduced by an English ship from the coast of Africa, loaded with slaves; inflicting upon the country, at the same instant, two of the greatest curses which the arch-enemy of our race could have devised. The infectious disease we cannot lay to the charge of England. It was one of those accidents which can only be referred to the mysterious visitations of that all-wise, but inscrutable providence, which rules over all the affairs of our little world. But for the other, and not less hideous evil, the introduction of slavery, that Government is directly responsible;

and, however high and noble the principles of benevolence, by which the present race of Englishmen are actuated in their endeavors to procure universal emancipation, it ill becomes them to reproach us, or our fathers, for the existence of a curse among us, which their own government forced upon us, and their own fathers supplied and sustained, with a zeal and perseverance worthy of a better cause. Ages of penance and contrition, will not wipe out this dark stain from the British escutcheon.

Vera Cruz is more subject to the yellow fever, than perhaps any other place on the coast. This is chiefly owing to the filthy ditch before spoken of, from which the lower classes are compelled to obtain a part of their supply of water, and to the pools of stagnant water, which abound among the sand hills in the vicinity. If these could be drained off, and the city supplied with wholesome water, there can be no doubt it would fare as well in the matter of health, as any other place on the coast, instead of being regarded, as it is now, by the Spanish physicians, as the source and fountain-head of yellow fever for the whole country. There is scarcely any season of the year exempt from its ravages, but it prevails most in the rainy season, particularly in September and October.

The history of Vera Cruz, as a place of importance to the Spaniards, commences with the very first steps of the conquest. The name of San Juan de Ulloa, was given to the island where the Castle now stands, by Grijalva, on his pioneer visit to the place, in 1518, where he was so roughly handled by the "natives." Cortes, after touching at Cozumel, made a landing at

this place, in 1519. He afterwards laid the foundation of a colony in the vicinity, at the mouth of the river Antigua. It was from this point that he set out on his adventurous march to the capital of the Astec empire—an adventure seemingly the most rash and ill advised, but in its results, the most triumphant, in the annals of history.

The present site of Vera Cruz, which was founded by Count de Monterey, near the close of the sixteenth century, and is sometimes, by way of distinction, called Vera Cruz Nueva, is not the same as that of the ancient city, planted by Cortes. That was situated fifteen miles to the north from the city of our day, and was called "La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz"—The rich town of the true cross. The harbor of the old town is far better than that of the new, which, in fact, is no harbor at all, but an open roadsted, exposed to every blast from the north. No good reason has been assigned for the removal. One historian has suggested that it was owing to the unhealthiness of the old town. If so, it is no mean illustration of the sagacity of the unfortunate fish, that, in attempting to escape his inevitable fate, "jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire."

CHAPTER VI.

SANTA ANNA DE TAMAULIPAS, AND ITS VICINITY.

THE old and new towns.—The French Hotel.—Early history of the place.—Remains of an ancient Indian town.—Situation of Pueblo Nuevo.—Health of the place.—Commerce.—Smuggling.—Corruption in Public Offices.—Letters and Mails.—Architecture.—Expense of living.—Tone of morals. Gaming.—The soldiery.—Degraded condition of the Indians.—The Cargadores.—The market place.—Monument to Santa Anna.—The Bluff.—Pueblo Viejo.—Visit to the ruins.—Desolate appearance of the place.—“La Fuente.”—Return at sunset.—The Rancheros of Mexico.—The Arrieros.

ON the 17th of February, we bade adieu to Vera Cruz, and sailed along the coast, northwardly, for Tampico, distant over two hundred miles. The passage was a very favorable one; and we arrived at our destination on the evening of the following day. Coming to anchor outside the bar, a launch from the shore, manned by naked Indians, was soon at our service, to take us up to the city. It was a pull of six miles on the river Panuco. On our way up, we passed Pueblo Viejo, or the old town of Tampico, on our left, once a place of considerable trade, but now deserted, and comparatively in ruins. Two miles above this place, we landed

at the mole, as it is called, where our luggage underwent the usual vexatious examinations; after which, permission was given us to enter the town of Santa Anna de Tamaulipas, known also as the Pueblo Nuevo, or New Town of Tampico.

I was soon ensconced in a hotel, kept by a Frenchman. It was a sad place. The accommodations, if such a word can, with any propriety, be used in reference to such a house, were as uninviting as could be desired. The house was, in all respects, uncomfortable and dirty, and the charges \$2, 50 per day. But a shelter, in this country, though a poor one, is something to be thankful for; and, in the almost universal absence of comfort, one often has occasion to be grateful for any thing that bears a distant resemblance to it. With this kind of philosophy, I endeavored to console myself in the present instance, remembering that my situation was not quite as bad as it might be, nor indeed as it oftentimes had been in other places.

Santa Anna de Tamaulipas stands on what was once the site of a populous Indian town, which was first visited by Juan de Grijalva, in 1518. This "hopeful young man and well behaved," as he is described by one of the old historians, was the captain of the second expedition, sent from Cuba, to explore the large and rich islands, as they were then supposed to be, lying to the west, part of which were discovered by Columbus in 1502 and 1503, and part by Juan Dias de Solis and Vincent Yañez Pinzon, in 1506. At this place, Grijalva had a severe conflict with the "natives," who defended "their altars and their homes" with great bravery. The old historians of the conquest agree that

Cortes, who followed Grijalva, and finally succeeded in reducing the whole country to the Spanish yoke, met with a warm reception on the Panuco. Few places were more ably defended, or more reluctantly surrendered by the Indians.

But few traces remain of the ancient city, or of its brave inhabitants. Yet occasionally, in digging for the foundations of buildings recently erected, the bones, and sometimes complete skeletons, of that unfortunate race are found, as well as remains of their household utensils.

Fifteen years ago, this place was occupied only by a few Indian huts, and Pueblo Viejo, the old town, was in its most flourishing condition. But the superior advantages of this position were too apparent to be longer overlooked by the searching eye of commercial enterprise. The bank of the river is very bold, and the water of sufficient depth to allow vessels to anchor close to the shore; and the navigation inland is uninterrupted for more than a hundred miles. The town is laid out in regular squares. The site is a sort of low flat shelf of land, forming the terminus of a rocky peninsula, above and back of which there is a cluster of lakes or ponds, having an outlet into the Panuco. These ponds, like those in the vicinity of Vera Cruz, are fruitful of yellow fever, which annually ravages this devoted coast. This terrible scourge, which seems to be one of the settled perquisites of the place, together with the formidable bar at the mouth of the river, are serious drawbacks to the prosperity of the town. Were it possible to remove them, I think there is little doubt that Santa Anna de Tamaulipas would soon become one of the most flourishing seaport towns in Mexico. Its

local situation is favorable—it is the nearest point on the coast to the richest of the mining districts, and the place from which the greater portion of the specie is exported. It has also a considerable business in dyewoods and hides.

But the commerce of Santa Anna de Tamaulipas has been declining for several years, and, unless some new impulse is given to it, by some such improvements as are above suggested, it must continue to decline. The little business that is now done there, is chiefly in the hands of foreigners.

Smuggling was once carried on here to a very great extent ; but the severe and stringent regulations of the government, have nearly succeeded in breaking it up. Or, to speak with more perfect accuracy, the business has changed hands, and that, which was before done through the venality of the subordinates, is now carried on by the direct connivance of the heads of the departments, who have contrived to monopolize to themselves this lucrative traffic, and thus, by robbing the government, to enrich themselves and the merchants at the same time. There is probably no country in the world, where there is such utter destitution of good faith and common honesty, on the part of those who contrive to secure the offices of trust. It is a remark of almost universal application, though it will probably apply with peculiar emphasis to the custom house department, where the largest amount of spoils are necessarily to be found. The most glaring cases of fraud are constantly occurring. Thousands of dollars are weekly passed over to the officials, which never find their way into the treasury ; and thousands that

have gone in are missing, having never honestly found their way out. But little attention is paid to these instances of corruption. The criminals, though well known, are allowed to retain their stations; or, if by chance removed, through the complaints of those who are eager to step into their places, they are only elevated to more important and lucrative offices, where they have a wider field of operation, and a better chance to serve themselves, *and those who appointed them*. How far we of the United States may be placing ourselves in the condition of those who live in glass houses, by thus throwing stones at the Mexicans, I know not. But it is my candid opinion, shrewd and cunning as we are allowed to be in all matters of finance, that we are quite out-done in these matters by our more southern neighbors.

Letters arriving or departing by ship, cannot be delivered, without first passing through the Post Office. The charges, which are very high, are regulated by weight, as under the new system in the United States. No captain, or consignee, is permitted to receive a letter, without the government stamp, under a heavy penalty. Whether the same restriction and penalty is laid upon passengers and travellers, I am not informed; but it would be very difficult to carry them without observation, as every nook and corner of every trunk, box, or bag, is searched, as well as the linings of every article of dress, and even of your boots and shoes. All letters are liable to seizure and inspection, and they are often broken, when any cause of jealousy or suspicion arises. The ordinary mails in the northern part of the country, are more regular than rapid, being, for the

most part, transported on the backs of the Indians. Of course, neither money, nor valuable documents of any kind, are entrusted to this conveyance. An armed *conducta* performs this service between the mines and the capital, and between the capital and the principal seaports.

In the buildings of Santa Anna de Tamaulipas, there is no uniformity of style, and no pretensions to beauty. American, English, and Spanish, are intermingled with the rude hut of the Indian. The population is as motley and heterogeneous as can well be conceived; and with the variety of feature, expression, manners, costume and no costume, ranks under what may be termed *the picturesque*.

Notwithstanding the gradual decline of business here, rents and wages are extremely high, and the prices paid for every article of consumption are so enormous, that I should scarcely be believed if I should name them. And this, too, among a beggarly-looking, half-naked population. The average range of the thermometer is from 86° to 92°.

As might be expected, from what has been said already, the general tone of morals in society is by no means elevated. The native, or Creole population, are, for the most part, shamefully ignorant and debased, and, with few exceptions, destitute of moral principle. They are extremely jealous of foreigners, and seem to regard every stranger coming among them as an unwelcome intruder. As far as I had an opportunity of judging, which was not inconsiderable, I should say that, as a race, they are as destitute of ambition to improve, as they are of education. There is no taste

among them for the cultivation of the fine arts, which once flourished in this ill-fated country; whether among the remote ancestors of the present Indian tribes, or among other and nobler races of men, it is not easy now to decide.

The almost universal resource of the Creoles, is the gaming table, at which numbers of them spend a large portion of their time. In this miserable and demoralizing recreation, I am sorry to be obliged to say, that the "natives" are not the only sharers. Strangers, who resort here for business, whether English, American, Spanish or French, with a few rare and honorable exceptions, sustain and encourage them by their example. Large amounts are sometimes lost and won, though, for the most part, the stakes are light; the passion being rather for gaming, and its attendant excitements, than for winning.

The Indians, another and inferior class of natives, though nominally free, are in fact slaves. They are the drudges and bearers of burdens, for the whole community. They are ignorant, indolent and unthrifty to the last degree, and seem to have no idea of the possibility of bettering their condition. Like their superiors, they are much addicted to gaming, though necessarily on a very limited scale. In their condition of desperate poverty, they have little to lose; but that little is daily put at stake, and lost, or rather thrown away, with as much coolness and indifference, as if the inexhaustible mines of their golden mountains were all their own. And it not unfrequently happens, that, having lost his last *maravedi*, he stakes himself upon another throw, and becomes the temporary slave of the winner. The

laws, though they do not recognize slavery in the abstract, are so constructed, as to admit of this arrangement. The consequence is, that vast numbers, whom indolence or improvidence have reduced to the necessity of running in debt to their white neighbors, are as truly slaves, as they were before the revolution.

It is from the native Indians, that the rank and file of the Mexican army is, for the most part, supplied. A greater burlesque upon the name of a soldier can scarcely be conceived—a debased, insolent, drunken, half-naked rabble, in comparison with which Colonel Pluck's famous regiment would have made a display so brilliant, as to make all Philadelphia stare. It is a marvel to me how they can accomplish any thing with such a miserable set of ill-appointed, semi-civilized beings, especially, when their enlistment is for the most part compulsory, while they fight for self-constituted, tyrannical, unfeeling masters, and not for themselves, or their children. I should suppose that a single company of well disciplined Anglo-Saxon soldiers, would be more than a match for an ordinary Mexican army. If it was with such regiments as these, that Santa Anna undertook to reduce the refractory province of Texas, it is no matter of surprise that a handful of Yankee adventurers were able, not only to keep him at bay, but to put him, and his army of scarecrows, completely to route.

The Indian, as I have before remarked, is the abject slave of the Mexican; and upon him devolves every kind of menial labor. The "Cargadores," who act as porters, are seen in all the streets. They carry the heaviest burdens, such as bales, barrels, boxes, etc.

upon their backs; dray and draft horses being unknown here. Others are seen in the market places, and lying about the public streets, houseless, and almost naked, objects at once of pity and disgust to those unaccustomed to such sights. No means are employed, and no desire manifested, on the part of their superiors, to improve their character or condition. Politically, the Mexican regards them as his equals, while he treats them far worse than even the English do their slaves, either at home or abroad.

The Market Place of Tampico is a rude open square, without embellishment, natural or artificial, one corner of which is occupied with stalls or tables, for meats and vegetables, which are guarded and dealt out by as motley a set of beggars as I had ever seen, as uninviting group of caterers as can well be imagined. The tarriers at home can little realize the many disagreeable offsets to the pleasure one derives from visiting foreign lands; while the traveller learns, by a painful daily experience, to appreciate all the little conveniences and proprieties, as well as the thousand substantial comforts of home.

In the centre of this square, a monument is to be erected in honor of the celebrated General Santa Anna, commemorating his successful encounter with the old Spanish forces, in this place, in the year 1829, during the last struggles of Mexico to throw off the yoke of Spain, and establish an independent government. The foundation of this monument is finished, and the builders are waiting the arrival of the column from New York, where, as I was informed, Italian artists are employed in completing it. It is intended to be worthy

of the name of the distinguished man in whose honor it is reared, and of the event which it is designed to commemorate. How the two can be fitly blended in one inscription, it is difficult to conceive. The victory which Santa Anna achieved over the Spanish oppressors of the struggling province, may indeed have a claim to be recorded on the enduring marble; but, for the honor due to a *name* like that of the exiled hero of San Jacinto, a name so long associated with every species of tyranny and oppression, of treason to his country, and of treachery alike to friend and to foe—how shall it be appropriately expressed? In what terms of mingled eulogium and execration shall it be couched? “*The NAME and the EVENT!*” It will doubtless be an easy matter to frame an inscription suitable to the *event*—but to illustrate the glory of the *name*—*hoc opus, his labor est.*

In a state of society like that which has existed in Mexico, for many years past, it would seem a difficult task to erect monuments to illustrate the services of their great men. Revolution succeeding revolution, and dynasty chasing dynasty, in rapid succession like the waves of the sea, a successful leader has scarcely time to reach the post his high ambition has aimed at, and procure a decree for a triumph and a monument, before a rival faction has obtained possession of all the outposts, and begins to thunder under the walls of the capital. One after another, they have risen, and fallen, and passed away, some of them for ever, and some only to rise again with more rapid strides, and then to experience a more ruinous fall, than before. The monument which was begun yesterday in honor of one successful

hero, may, to-morrow, be consecrated to the victory won over him by his enemy ; and then, perhaps, be thrown down to give place to another, which commemorates the overthrow of both.

How many times the government of Mexico is destined to be overturned and remodeled, before the completion of the Tampico monument, and what will be the position of the man for whose honor it was originally designed, when the column shall be ready to be placed on its pedestal, it would be hazardous to conjecture. It may not be unsafe, however, to predict, that neither this, nor any other column, or statue, erected in Mexico, will confer upon Santa Anna a greater notoriety than he now enjoys, or in any way alter the world's estimate of his true character. Impartial history has marred the beauty of many a monumental tablet, and converted that which was meant for glory, into a perpetual memorial of shame.

A few yards from the Market place is a bold bluff of rock, fronting the Panuco, from the top of which we have an extensive view of the surrounding country. Near this place, the River Tamissee, which drains the adjacent lagoons, forms its junction with the Panuco, which sweeps gracefully along from the southwest, broken and diversified by a number of low wooded islands, which disturb, but beautify its course.

On the opposite shore, at some distance, lies the lagoon of Pueblo Viejo, and beyond that, but within sight from this bluff, the ruins of the old town, situated on a beautiful plateau, or table land, flanked by the spires of the Cordilleras.

The low lands of the suburbs are filled with rude

huts of the Indians, built chiefly of bamboo, and covered with the palm-leaf. A more squalid state of misery than is exhibited among this class, both here and in the town, it has never fallen to my lot to witness.

Not satisfied with this distant view of the ruins of the Pueblo Viejo, I determined to form a nearer acquaintance with them, by a personal visit. The American Consul, and his accomplished lady, very kindly accompanied me thither, in a canoe, under the guidance of an Indian. We descended the Panuco a short distance, and passed into a bayou communicating with one of the great lagoons, near which the old town is situated. The locale is decidedly agreeable and picturesque. Though in the uplands, it lies at the foot of a steep and thickly wooded hill, which affords a variety of romantic retreats, and commanding look-outs for the surrounding country. But, however much they might have been improved and valued in former times, they are now deserted, and forgotten. An almost death-like tranquillity reigns in the forsaken streets and environs, forming a melancholy contrast to the half European, and comparatively bustling aspect of its now more prosperous rival.

The houses are low-built, with flat roofs. The façades of some of them show, in the faded gaiety, and dubious taste of their coloring, what they were in the palmy days of the Pueblo Viejo's early glory. Many of them had court-yards and porticos. One group of old buildings, of Spanish architecture, situated near the humble church that consecrated the public square, shows many marks of its ancient grandeur, even in its present state of desolation and decay.

It is painful to stroll through the streets of a city of our own times, once full of life and bustle, but now falling into the decrepitude of a premature old age. It is like walking among the sepulchres of the living; and the few signs of life that remain, only serve to give intensity to the shadows of night that are deepening around it. Here, there was nothing to relieve the melancholy aspect of the scene. The people, both masters and slaves, were poor, listless and inactive; their dwellings were comfortless and uninviting, and their lands miserably neglected and unproductive. A death-like incubus seemed to hang on the whole place.

We traversed the whole length of the streets, through the suburbs, to visit "La Fuente," which is situated in a small dell at the foot of the hill which overhangs the town. It is a beautiful spot, ornamented with every variety of flower. Its source was concealed from view. "La Fuente" is an artificial stone reservoir, of considerable length, beautifully overshadowed with trees, from whose branches depends a kind of curtain of interwoven vines, falling in the most luxuriant festoons on every side. It is not now, as perhaps it has been in former days, a place of public resort for recreation. It is the general laundry of Tampico; and its margin is daily crowded, not with sylphs and naiads, but with a motley set of Indian women, more appropriately compared to ancient sybils, or modern gypsies. It was, altogether, the most remarkable and striking scene that had fallen under my view in my recent travels, and one that would figure well in the hands of the author of the "Twice Told Tales," or the "Charcoal Sketches." To their notice I commend it, with

free license to make what use they please of my poor description.

The sun was setting when we returned to Santa Anna de Tamaulipas. We paddled slowly away, pausing occasionally to admire—with my agreeable companions—the brilliant effect of the last rays of day light upon the lakes, woods and mountains, and the luxuriant foliage, realizing more fully than I had ever been able to do before, the rare beauty of those remarkable lines of Beattie—

Oh! how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms that nature to her votary yields,
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields,
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven—
Oh! how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!

Winding between verdant banks, through the broken channel, into the beautiful Panuco, we reached the mole before night-fall, well satisfied with the adventures of the day.

Before leaving the town, I wish to introduce to the reader two classes of men, who are somewhat peculiar in their appearance, characters and habits, as well as somewhat important in their relations to the business of the country.

The *Rancheros* are a mixed race of Mexican and Indian blood. They live on the Ranchos, or large cattle farms, and act as drovers. They are brave, and full of life and vivacity, but profoundly ignorant of every thing

beyond their immediate occupations. There is an air of independence, and a fearlessness of manner, in the *Ranchero*, which is quite imposing. Sallying forth on his sinewy horse, encased in leather, with the ready lasso at his saddle bow, he seems, though in coarse attire, the embodiment of health, strength and agility.

The *Arrieros*, the muleteers of the country, have their peculiarities, the most striking of which, and by far the most agreeable, is, that they are honest. For this virtue they are proverbial, as indeed they should be in a land where it is scarcely known in any other class of society. Many of them pride themselves much upon their vocation, which frequently passes down from father to son, through several generations. They are civil, obliging and cheerful. They have, as a class, the entire confidence of the community, and millions of property are confided to their care. Their honesty and trustworthiness remain unimpaired amid all the political changes of the country. Often as they are compelled to change masters, they serve the new with the same fidelity as the old, and a stranger, or even an enemy, as well as a friend.

Although this rigid honesty and trustworthiness, in this class of persons in Mexico, is worthy of remark and of all praise, I take pleasure in stating, from my own personal observation, that it is not peculiar to that country. The same class of persons in many parts of the United States, are distinguished for the same virtue. Our common stage drivers and mail carriers, although their employment is of the hardest character, and their general associations such as to expose them to many of the worst temptations of taverns, bar-rooms, and other

kindred influences, are as well known for their integrity and faithfulness, in the trusts committed to them, as for their skill and fearlessness in the management of their teams. It is the common custom, in many parts of the country, to employ these men in conveying remittances from the interior, to the banks, or merchants, in the sea-port towns. Thousands and thousands of dollars are daily sent in this way, without receipt or acknowledgment, and with perfect reliance on the faithfulness of the carrier. And I do not remember an instance, in that part of the country where I have been most acquainted, in which this confidence has been misplaced. If the Mexican *Arriero* is deserving of more credit for his virtue, in consequence of the inferior tone of morals in the community about him, we would not willingly deprive him of it. At the same time, we confess to a patriotic pride in finding, for every thing that is "lovely and of good report" in foreign lands, an offset of something equally good, or better, at home.

CHAPTER VII.

CANOE VOYAGE UP THE RIVER PANUCO. RAMBLES AMONG THE RUINS OF ANCIENT CITIES.

AN independent mode of travelling.—The river and its banks.—Soil and productions.—A Yankee brick yard.—Indian huts.—Their manner of living.—Their position in society.—Their dress, stature and general appearance.—Arrival at Topila Creek.—Mr. Coss' rancho.—The Lady's Room.—Company at night.—An aged Indian.—His ignorance of the past.—Mounds.—Ruins of an ancient town.—Rancho de las Piedras.—Topila Hills.—Numerous Mounds.—An ancient well.—A wild fig-tree.—Extensive ruins.—An evening scene.—Attack of the Bandaleros.—Happy escape:

ON the evening of the 14th of March, 1844, I took a temporary leave of Tampico, and proceeded up the river Panuco, with the intention of visiting, and as far as my time and means might allow, of exploring the ruins then known to exist, and of seeking others which I supposed might be found, in that vicinity. My mode of conveyance was as primitive and independent, as can well be imagined. In my own hired canoe, with an Indian to paddle me along, I felt that I was master of my own time and movements, and enjoyed, for a season, a perfect freedom from the ordinary restraints

and responsibilities of social life. Leaving care, and business, and the world behind, and committing my little all to the favoring smiles of an omnipresent Providence, I threaded my way through the circuitous windings of that romantic stream, with a resolute purpose to enjoy every thing, and be annoyed at nothing, however strange it might be. This disposition is essential to the comfort of the traveller, in any strange land, and especially in one that is barbarous, or semi-civilized; and, under whatever circumstances it is put in requisition, it is its own sufficient reward.

The river Panuco rises among the lakes near the city of Mexico, and winds its meandering way, under several different names, the principal of which is "Canada," till it debouches into the Gulf of Mexico, six miles below Tampico. It is navigable about one hundred and forty miles, for all vessels that can pass the bar at its mouth; and yet, owing to its circuitous course, the distance *by land*, from this head of navigation to Tampico, is not more than forty miles. The river seldom swells so as to overflow its banks. The land, on either side, was found, on examination, to be a deep, rich loam, capable of producing corn, sugar, tobacco and rice. The sugar cane found in this region is extremely productive. It grows in height from fourteen to twenty feet, and requires re-planting but once in nine or ten years. It will be a glorious region for amateur planters and speculators, when "the area of freedom" shall have extended to the Isthmus of Panama. Ebony, rose-wood, dye-woods of various kinds, and sarsaparilla, are cut here in great abundance, and are important articles of exportation.

The banks of this river, though beautifully arrayed in the verdure of nature, want that humanizing interest, that peculiar utilitarian charm, which cultivation and occupation alone can impart. Our progress, therefore, though always presenting something new to the eye, seemed comparatively slow and tedious, with little of life, but that which we carried along with us, to disturb its quiet monotony.

As the evening of the first day was setting in, we stopped at a brick yard, the property of two enterprising kind-hearted Americans, by whom we were hospitably entertained, and who informed us that our day's journey had been made, by travelling a distance of eighteen miles. The new town of Santa Anna de Tamalipas, brought into requisition, and gave employment to many of our countrymen. And, when the making of brick became lucrative, our good-natured hosts determined to lose no time in taking advantage of the occasion. The adventure was accordingly made, and a few years' thrift has placed their affairs in a hopeful and healthy condition. But, like all other foreigners in this country, they are heartily tired of remaining here, and are looking forward with much anxiety to the happy day, when they shall be enabled to return to their native land; for, such are the decrees of the government, that, in direct violation of treaty, an open warfare is kept up against the rights and interests of all emigrants,—but, more particularly, those from the United States,—many of whom are sacrificing their property and prospects of affluence, and leaving the country in utter disgust.

Early the following morning, we proceeded on our

course up the river, stopping, occasionally, to visit the rude huts of the Indians. The huts are formed principally of mud, with thatched roofs, and present a most uncomfortable appearance; whilst the poor, degenerated occupants, derive a mean and scanty support, from a small strip of land along the banks of the river, their chief object being the cultivation of corn for their own use. Pieces of clay, put rudely together and baked, are the common utensils for cooking their food; and a few upright sticks or reeds, driven into the mud floor, with a hide stretched over them, constitute their most luxurious bed. Indolent and filthy, they work only to meet their own immediate wants; and, so degraded is their condition, that gaming and cock-fighting are their principal pastimes. The inebriating bowl, also, is eagerly sought by them, and a large portion of their earnings is spent in this riotous way, even under the guidance of their priests, at the celebration of a marriage, or on the occasion of a christening.

The Indians of Central America, bear as little resemblance to those of our country generally, as the Spaniards among whom they dwell do, to us. They do not, in any place, live by themselves, as independent tribes. They have no peculiar habits of life, or of warfare—no hunting—no sports peculiar to themselves—and none of the customs of their ancestors preserved, to distinguish them from the mass of people about them. It is only their complexion, their poverty, and generally degraded condition, that marks the difference between them and their neighbors. They occupy nearly the same position there, as the free blacks do in the United States, with this difference in favor of the latter—that there is

nothing in the spirit of our institutions, civil, or religious, that prevents them from attaining a respectable education, and a comfortable independence.



AN INDIAN MAN AND WOMAN.

Ordinarily, the men wear trousers,—sometimes shirts of cotton,—but, in many parts of the country, owing to the prohibition of certain qualities and textures, this luxury is fast disappearing, and the more primitive dress of *skins* is taking its place. The *reboza*, a narrow scarf, thrown over the head and shoulders, is indispensable to females. No matter what constitutes the other portion of their covering, even though, as is oftentimes the case, their wardrobe is so scanty as scarcely to cover their limbs, yet this is considered paramount. On one occasion, I remember to have seen a female, with a

rebosa upon her head, which cost no less than twenty-five dollars, whilst her body was miserably covered with a sort of under garment, or petticoat, such as few of our common street beggars would be willing to wear.

These people are of the usual color and stature of the Mexican Indians, but not so finely formed as the majority of them are,—nor have they that good expression, so prominent among the people of the southern portions of Mexico. They seem, moreover, to be entirely destitute of that spirit of religion, which their manifest appreciation of some religious rites, would naturally lead us to expect. Altogether, they are the most unfavorable specimen of the natives that have fallen under my observation.

Before night-fall of the second day of our voyage, we reached the mouth of the Topila Creek, a distance of twenty miles from the brick-yard. Continuing our course up that stream about three miles, we came to a rancho, or cattle-farm, belong to a Mr. Coss, of Tampico, brother of the celebrated general of Texan memory. Before I left Tampico, this gentleman gave me a letter to his major-domo, a half-breed, who received us with great attention. The letter being very explicit on the subject of *accommodation*, I could not but fare well in this respect,—and it may yet, perhaps, be gathered from the sequel, that I was treated more like a prince than a common traveller.

Arriving at the place, we were ushered into a bamboo house, with mud walls, and floors of the same primitive material. This house contained no less than two apartments. One of these, sustained the distinguished appellation of "*the lady's room*"—and it was

now my privilege to become its *sole* occupant. In one corner of the room, stood a bedstead, without bed or bedding; and a dressing-table, decorated with sundry condemned combs, oil-bottles, scissors and patches, occupied another; whilst a demijohn of aguardiente, and other interesting ornaments, such as saddles, guns, and swords, filled up the picture. However, as I intended to make this place my head-quarters, while exploring the hills and river banks in the neighborhood, I at once resolved to be satisfied with "the lady's room," and such other good things as the place afforded. Accordingly, at an early hour, I spread out my blanket, and retired for the night;—"deep into the darkness peering—long I lay there, fondly dreaming," as before observed, that I was "alone in my glory."

But, alas! the soft reflections of dreamy hours were disturbed by an unexpected visit from a goodly number of well-disciplined, noxious little animals, who introduced themselves to me in a most significant, yet unceremonious manner. No remarks being made respecting the object of their visit, I was left to infer, that the kindness of the major-domo had moved him to organize a new company of lancers, for my especial benefit. After many unsuccessful attempts to induce this unsolicited force to withdraw, my attention was politely called to another quarter. Having been strongly impressed, I was now fully convinced, of the immediate presence of sundry young pigeons, many of whom, protected by their maternal parents, were perched in the crevices of the wall over my head. These, together with the game fowls, setting under my bed, contributed much to destroy that confidence which,

until now had not been disturbed, that I had actually secured the undivided occupancy of that unique apartment. Of course, it was unnecessary to arouse me in the morning.

Before sunrise, I found myself well equipped for the explorations of the day. The mules being in readiness, I started in company with a guide, and rode five miles to another rancho, where, as I was informed, there lived an Indian upwards of a hundred years of age. I found him, to my surprise, a hale and sturdy man—though he could give me no intelligence respecting the objects of my research. Indeed, so suspicious are these people of the designs of strangers, that it was with the utmost difficulty I could convince him, as well as others, that my only motive in visiting the country, was to acquaint myself with the ancient places of their forefathers; not, as they supposed, to roam in quest of gold and silver mines.

Supposing that, in a man so much beyond the ordinary limit of human life, whose memory might extend back almost one-third of the way to the era of the Spanish conquest, and who was now in the full possession of his faculties, I had found a rare and enviable opportunity to pry into the mysteries of the past, and learn something of the history of the remarkable people, who once occupied this whole region, and filled it with monuments of their genius, taste, and power;—I employed all my ingenuity to draw out of him whatever he knew. But it was pumping at an exhausted well. Of facts, of history, in any form, he had nothing to tell. He seemed not to have a thought that there was anything to be told, except one vague unsatisfactory

tradition, the only one existing among the inhabitants in all this region, that once on a time—they have no conception when, whether a hundred or a thousand years ago—“giants came from the North, as was prophesied by the gods, killed and destroyed the people, and continued on to the South.” This tradition, bearing a strong analogy to one which prevails among nearly all the aboriginal tribes of the Mississippi Valley, and the wilds of the west, seems to be the only connecting link between the present generation, and that mysteriously interesting blank—the exterminated obliterated Past.

In the vicinity of this rancho, in an easterly direction from it, I found, in several considerable mounds, the first traces of ancient art that had greeted my eyes. One of these mounds was more than twenty-five feet in height, and of a circular form. At its sides, a number of layers of small, flat, well-hewn stones were still to be seen. Scattered about, in its immediate neighborhood, were also many others of a larger size, and of different forms. These had apparently once been used for the sides of door-ways and lintels. They were perfectly plain, without any mark or sign of ornament.

Upon this spot once stood one of those ancient Indian towns, the memorials of whose departed greatness and glory are so often met with, in every part of this interesting country. The ruins in this place are ruins indeed, so dilapidated as not to afford, at the present time, the remotest clue to the manners and customs of the builders, or the degree of civilization to which they may have attained. I traversed the whole ground, as well as the rank vegetation, and wild ani-

mals would permit, and found my way back to the Topila at dark,—congratulating myself on having been able to accomplish so much, in the way of exploration, with no other protection than the untanned skin of an American, while that of a rhinoceros seemed absolutely necessary to the undertaking; for both the animal and vegetable kingdoms appeared to be combined against the intrusion of man.

On the morning of the next day, I set out with a party of Indians, on a visit to the *Rancho de las Piedras*, distant about two leagues and a half, in a south-east direction. We made our way, slowly, and wearily, as usual, threading the thick wilds with much toil and fatigue, until we reached a rise of land, or plateau, near a chain of hills running through this section of country, and known as the Topila Hills. Here I found stones that were once evidently used for buildings. Proceeding on our way, we came to other and clearer evidences of ancient art. These were mounds, the sides of which had been constructed of loose layers of smooth and uniform blocks of concrete sandstone;—but most of the layers had fallen from their original position, and were found in large masses near the elevation. The blocks of stone, with a surface eighteen inches square, measured about six inches in thickness, and appeared to have been laid without mortar, or other adhesive material. I observed about twenty of these mounds, contiguous to each other, and varying in height from six to twenty-five feet,—some being of a circular, and others of a square form; but, unlike most of those found in other parts of the country, they were not laid out with any degree of regularity. On the top

of one of the largest, there had evidently been a terrace, though it was difficult, in its present dilapidated state, to define its outlines, or judge of its extent.

The principal elevation covers an area of about two acres. At the base of this mound, was a slab of stone about seven inches in thickness, well hewn, and of a circular form, having a hole through the centre, and resting upon a circular wall, or foundation, the top of which was level with the ground. This stone measured four feet nine inches in diameter. On removing it, I discovered a well, filled up with broken stone and fragments of pottery. Stone coverings in wells have been found in the ancient works on the main branches of Paint Creek, Ohio, bearing a strong resemblance to the one here noticed; and it is also worthy of remark, that wells covered in this way, strongly resemble the descriptions we have of those used in the patriarchal ages. How much of an argument might be made, from such an isolated circumstance as this, to confirm the opinion entertained by some able writers, that the aboriginal inhabitants of America were the descendants of Abraham, the lost ten tribes, who revolted under Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and were carried away into Assyria, I shall not undertake to decide. Many a fair theory, however, has been erected upon a foundation no broader than this, nor more substantial; and many a volume has been written to sustain the shadowy fabric.

I should have stated above, that the upper side of the stone removed, bore evidence of having been originally wrought with ornamental lines; but these lines were so much obliterated by time and exposure to the weather, that they could not now be traced.

On the top of this mound, a wild fig-tree, more than a hundred feet high, grows luxuriantly, indicating by its size and age, that the mound on which it stands, is not the work of modern builders.

The walls of the smaller mounds had invariably fallen inwards, a circumstance which led to the conjecture that they had been used as burying places. For, as the bones within would, in process of time, decay and moulder into dust, the loose walls, having no cement to hold them together, would gradually settle in upon the ashes of the dead. The ground for several miles around, was strewn with loose hewn stones, of various shapes, and broken pieces of pottery, evidently parts of household utensils; also, fragments of obsidian, which no doubt had been used as the knives and spears of a people, respecting whom, little is known at this day, except that they were a warlike race, and far advanced in the arts of civilization. The nearest point now known, where this mineral can be obtained, is *Pelados*, near the Real del Monte, in the vicinity of the city of Mexico. The celebrated "Mountain of Flints," which, though but twenty-four miles in extent, cost the indefatigable Cortes, and his brave band, twelve days of the most painful toil to surmount, lies still farther off, in the south western part of Yucatan.

An incident of a somewhat startling character, which occurred to me here, while it illustrates another feature in the state of society in these parts, and the character of the people whom the traveller sometimes has to deal with, will serve to bring the present chapter to close; leaving the interesting curiosities discovered among the

ruins, and a yet more thrilling adventure which befel me, to form the material for a separate chapter.

It was evening. The day had been spent in rambling and climbing about the time hallowed ruins of those old deserted cities, and searching among the mouldering relics of antiquity, for something to identify the dead with the living, or to serve as a satisfactory link between the past and the present. My Indian comrades and myself were cosily discussing our forest fare, each indulging in his own private reflections, and totally unsuspecting of any interruption to our humble meal, when we were suddenly surrounded by a band of those grim-looking, dark-bearded, heavily-whiskered gentlemanly-looking like highwaymen, that infest almost every part of the country. They immediately dismounted, and made us prisoners, seizing us by the hand as if they would bind us, to prevent our escape. We made no resistance, for we were unprepared for defence, and entirely at their mercy. Here, now, was trouble enough. What a poor finale to my brief and unprofitable adventures, to be murdered in cold blood by these merciless banditti, or made a hopeless captive in some of their mountain fastnesses! My position, feelings, and reflections, can be better imagined than described.

Having surveyed us from crown to toe, with the utmost scrutiny, and compared notes respecting our appearance, and the prospect of obtaining any satisfaction in our blood, they drew forth from their bags—the huge and fearful looking horse-pistol?—No. The long, glittering, keen-edged, high-tempered dirk, drunk with the blood of numberless victims of their rapacious cru-

elty?—No. The slender stiletto, so delicately formed and so exquisitely polished, as to insinuate itself into the vitals, ere the parted epidermis had realized the rent it had made in passing?—No. The savage cutlass?—the heavy, fierce-looking, trenchant broad-sword?—No. No these—nor any of them,—but, unexpected, and unheard of, even among civilized highwaymen—they drew out an ample store of substantial food, and invited us to partake of their supper. We did not shrink from their professed hospitality. We made ourselves of their party for the moment, and spent an hour, or more, in their company, with great glee, and with mutual satisfaction—after which, they mounted and rode off, and we took to our hammocks and our dreams.

By what token we escaped, I was not able to conjecture. Whether, as my vanity might have suggested, it was to be attributed to my good looks, or to my Spanish sombrero, flannel shirt, and bandolero air, or to the influence of some propitious star, just then in the ascendant, is a mystery yet to be explained. If I may have the same good fortune in escaping the censure of the reader, upon whose patience these trifling sketches have been inflicted, it will afford me a gratification that will far more than overbalance all the pains and inconveniences that I have suffered, from being brought into conflict with insects, wild beasts, and robbers.

CHAPTER VIII.

FURTHER EXPLORATION OF THE RUINS IN THE VICINITY OF THE RANCHO DE LAS PIEDRAS.

SITUATION of the Ruins.—Their probable antiquity.—A remarkable female head.—Description of it.—Where found.—Brought to New York.—Another head.—Difficulty of getting at it.—Its colossal proportions.—A particular description.—Indians disposed to leave me, but induced to remain.—The American Sphinx.—Description.—Conjectures of its origin and design.—Curiously ornamented head.—Its peculiar features.—Exploring the ruins a difficult work.—Annoyances.—Deserted by the Indians.—A delicate situation.—A fortunate escape.

THESE ruins are situated, as near as I could calculate with the primitive instruments constructed for the occasion, in longitude $98^{\circ} 31'$ west, and latitude $22^{\circ} 9'$ north, covering a space of several miles square, and have every appearance of being the remains of a single town. The whole place is completely covered with trees of the largest growth, so thickly interspersed with the rankest vegetation, that even the sun, or daylight itself, can scarcely find its way among them. So very dense and dark is the forest, and so constant and extensive the decomposition of vegetable matter going on beneath

it, that it impregnates the whole region with a humid and unwholesome atmosphere. It is true, that these circumstances have, in a great degree, hastened the dilapidation of the works of human skill around ; but, nevertheless, they furnish indisputable evidence of the great antiquity of those works.



FEMALE HEAD.

Among these ruins, I found a remarkable head, which, with various other relics of antiquity from the same interesting region, I had the honor of depositing in the collection of the New York Historical Society. This head, or rather face, a drawing of which I have the pleasure of here presenting to the reader, resembles

that of a female. It is beautifully cut from a fine sandstone, of a dark reddish hue, which abounds in this vicinity. The face, which is of the ordinary life size, stands out, in full relief, from the rough block, as if it were in an unfinished state, or as if designed to occupy a place among the ornamental work of a building. In several of its features, the lines are decidedly Grecian, and the symmetry and beauty of its proportions have been very much admired. How and where the artist may have obtained his model, and how far the existence of it may be deemed to confirm the statements of Plato and Aristotle, and favor the conjecture of an early settlement on this continent by the Phœnician navigators, I shall not now stay to inquire.

This striking figure I found, lying among vast piles of broken and crumbling stones, the ruins of dilapidated buildings, which were strewed over a vast space. It was in a remarkably good state of preservation, except the nose, which was slightly mutilated; not sufficiently so, however, to lose its uniformity, or destroy the beautiful symmetry of its proportions. The fillet, or band of the head-dress, which conceals the frontal developments, is unlike any thing found among the sculptured remains in this country, or worn by any of the native tribes.

On discovering this remarkable piece of sculpture—remarkable considering the place where it was found—I immediately commenced making a drawing of it. But, before completing the sketch, I was so struck with its singular beauty and perfection, that I determined to lay violent hands on it, and bring it away with me; fearing that a mere drawing would not be sufficient evi-

dence, to the incredulous world, of the existence of such a piece of work among the ruins of places, which had been built and peopled, according to the commonly received opinion, by a race of semi-barbarians. It was a work of no little labor and difficulty to secure it. But I finally succeeded in giving it a comfortable and a safe lodgment on the back of my mule, and so brought it to the bank of the river, where I embarked it in a canoe. It had several narrow escapes by the way, but was, at length, safely landed in New York.



COLOSSAL HEAD.

I also discovered among the rubbish, in this place, and not far from the spot where the above described

Grecian head was found, another large stone, with a head well sculptured upon its surface, in bold relief, as represented in the accompanying engraving. It was buried up in a mass of superincumbent ruins, and was only brought to light in the course of my laborious excavations. On removing the loose stones and dust which covered it—the labor of nearly a whole day—it stood as represented in the sketch. The face was not so finely chiselled, nor had it the same regular classic beauty of feature and proportion, as the one first seen and described; but still there is much in its general appearance to attract attention. It is different from any thing heretofore discovered on this side of the Atlantic. The features, like those of the head which I brought away with me, are decidedly those of the Caucasian race, bearing no resemblance to those of any of the tribes on this continent. The ears are rather large, and the hair is represented rather by a series of regular flutings, than by any attempt at the wavy lines, which are ordinarily deemed essential to grace in this capital ornament. A band, or collar, passes round from the back of the neck, close to, and supporting the face, and meeting in a point, a few inches below the chin.

The stone on which this figure was cut was circular, twelve feet in diameter, and three in thickness. The head, covering more than half its area, was of course of colossal proportions. The periphery of this mighty wheel was geometrically accurate and regular, and smoothly chiselled off, and would have served well, in ancient times, to fulfil the tartarean destiny of Sisyphus, or, in these modern times, for a Yankee mill-stone. It was a laborious task to clear away the stones and dirt

that had been accumulating about it, perhaps for ages. But the sight of it, when placed in an upright position, amply repaid me for all the toil and fatigue, which it cost me to effect it.

It was only with the greatest difficulty that I could keep my Indian allies at work. The influence of presents and coaxing was exhausted, long before I had attained my purpose with regard to this colossal figure-head. I then turned preacher, and addressed myself to their superstitious notions with some effect ; calling up my little stock of proverbial wisdom, to stimulate them to new exertions, and giving them to understand that I expected to find something better than loose and broken stones, in turning up the soil, and rummaging among the ruined sepulchres of the departed. They did not comprehend the drift of my oracular discourse ; but, like many other sermons, too profound for the comprehension of the hearers, it increased their reverence for the preacher, and made them more submissive to my orders.

The next object which arrested my attention, was one, the sight of which carried back my imagination to ages of classic interest, and to the marvels of human art and power, on the banks of the river of Egypt. It was not perhaps a Sphinx, in the language of the critical and fastidious antiquarian ; but sure I am, that no one, however scrupulous for the honor of oriental antiquities, could see it, without being strongly reminded of the fabulous monster of Thebes, and secretly wishing that he was so far an Œdipus, as to be able to solve the inexplicable riddle of its origin and design. It was the figure, as represented in the accompanying engrav-





ing, of a mammoth *turtle*, with the head of a man boldly protruded from under its gigantic shell. The figure of the amphibious monster measured over six feet in length, with a proportional width, and rested upon a huge block of concrete sand-stone. The back was correctly and artistically wrought, displaying the exact form, and all the scale lines of the turtle in good proportion. There were also, in many parts distinctly visible, fainter lines, to show that the peculiar arabesque of that ornamental shield had not been overlooked by the artist.

All the other parts were equally true to nature. It was much broken and mutilated, especially the human protuberance; but not sufficiently so to destroy the evidences of the skill with which it had been designed, and of the masterly workmanship with which it had been wrought. This head must, originally, have been an unusually fine specimen of ancient American art. Like all the others found in this region, it has the Caucasian outline and contour, and in its finish and expression, is strongly marked with the unmistakable impress of genius. It is rare, among these works, to meet with an entire head, like this. They are generally half buried in the rock from which they were hewn, as if designed to be placed in some conspicuous position in the façade, or interior wall of a building. This work gives the head complete, and the posterior developments of the cranium, as the phrenologist would say, are those of an intellectual and moral cast—that is to say, they are quite subordinate to the frontal developments. The forehead was originally high and broad, though the mutilated appearance of the upper part, as

given in the plate, would leave a different impression. The nose, as far as it remains is beautifully shaped and finely chiselled, as are also the lips, the chin, and the ears.

It is only for me to describe things as I saw them, leaving it to others, more profound than myself in antiquarian researches, to frame appropriate theories for their explanation. But I could not avoid the temptation to pause a little over this singular curiosity, with a lurking disposition to catechise conjecture, respecting its probable signification and end. But it was all in vain—a mere reverie of guess-work, without beginning or clue. Whether it was the offspring of a simple freak of the imagination of the artist;—whether it was one of the symbols of the worship of that unknown race, for whom the artist exercised his unholy craft of making “gods which are yet no gods;”—whether it was a quaint hieroglyphical memorial of some remarkable epoch in their history—some luckless Jonah half swallowed by a turtle, and for ever struggling to escape;—whether it was the emblematic device of a club of artistic gourmands, the sign to be placed over the door of their banqueting hall, designed to acknowledge and illustrate the intimate union and sympathy, the identity of nature, between man and beast, in those who “make a god of their belly;”—these are alternatives of conjecture, upon which we may speculate as we will, but from which it is neither safe nor easy to make a definite choice.

The probable history and design of “the American Sphinx”—for such I have taken the liberty to name it—will, I trust, be made a matter of more sober and suc-

cessful enquiry by some future traveller, more skilled than I can profess to be in antiquarian researches. It is an ample field, strewn on every side with subjects of the deepest interest. And he who shall first, by means of these only records that remain, scattered, disconnected, and crumbling into hopeless decay, decypher some legible tale of probability, and unravel a leading clue to the history of these now inexplicable relics, will win and deserve the admiring gratitude of all, who are curious to investigate the ever changing aspects of human society.

I had scarcely met with any thing, in all my rambles, more full of exciting interest, than the field I was now exploring; and I never so much regretted being alone. For a well read antiquarian to talk with—for a curious in hieroglyphical lore to trace out the mystic lines, and give an intelligent signification to the grotesque images about me—I would have given my last maravedi, and the better half of my humble stock of provisions. Fragments of various kinds, and of every size and form, lay scattered around me, on every side, in the immediate vicinity of this “American Sphinx,” affording in their shapes, though mutilated and imperfect, and in the lines of sculpture still traceable upon many of them, satisfactory *prima facie* evidence of having once composed the ornamental decorations of immense and splendid edifices, which now lay in utter ruins at my feet.

The place where I stood had evidently been the site of a large city, thronged with busy multitudes of human beings, whose minds were cultivated and refined, whose hearts throbbed high with human affections, and human

hopes, and who doubtless dreamed, as we do, that their works would make their names immortal. But where are they? A thousand echoes, from the hills and walls around, answer—*where?*

Proceeding with my excavations, and turning over large masses of earth, and stones of every size and shape, I was at length rewarded with the discovery of another figure, somewhat resembling, but in many



AN ORNAMENTED HEAD.

respects unlike, those which I have already shown. A sketch of it is given in the above engraving. It was merely the face, standing out in full relief from the block, which was entirely cut away from the top and bottom, but left, in two nearly circular projections, at the

sides. The head ornaments are striking and peculiar. They are not, as might be supposed from their appearance in the reduced scale of the engraving, miniature heads. If they were, I should venture to find in them another item of Grecian mythology, and boldly assume that the head was that of Jupiter, with three young Minervas in the act of issuing from his pregnant brain. Nor would the appearance of three, instead of one, in any manner stagger my faith, since it is well known, that America exceeds all other parts of the world in human and animal fecundity, as well as in the fertility of its soil. And why not equally so in its mythological reproductions? But, alas! for one of the most promising theories that ever was conceived, these ornaments are only balls, with slight indentations, connected together by a band running across the top of the head, and terminating at the sides, just above the ears. A phrenologist might possibly discern in them, the overgrown diseased developments of the intellectual organs residing in that part of the cranium.

The ears of this figure are monstrous, being nearly half the size of the face. The features, and the whole contour of the face, like the other two, will be seen to be entirely caucasian, having no element of the Indian or American, in any of its lines. It is seventeen inches in length, twenty one in breadth, including the huge ears, and ten in thickness. It was found in the side of a large pile of ruins, the remains of dilapidated walls and buildings, of which it had evidently formed one of the ornamental parts. There were fragments of others of the same general character, but none in so good preservation as this, which require a distinct description.

It required but a few days to examine this part of the country,—and I was really glad when the time expired ;—for, besides the immense labor of cutting every step of our way through a dense shrubbery, which covers most of the country, and a wilderness of trees and thickets, matted and woven together with thousands of creepers, together with plants, rendered almost impenetrable by their thorns, which, like spears, would pierce at every movement,—we had also to contend with myriads of insects of which the reading world has already heard so much from learned travellers, that it might be deemed a work of supererogation to speak of them again, and which, it will be observed are herein named, only in connection with other obstacles of greater magnitude,—such as the poisonous tarantula, which is often disturbed from its stony bed, and the tiger of the country, sometimes started from the thickets! But, to be *deserted* in this extremity, is a thing not easily to be borne. Yet so it was. My recently enlisted Indian comrades, being entirely out-done and astonished, gave me up as a wild or crazy man, and fled to their homes! Thus forsaken,—but not until after a week of research, I returned in safety to “the lady’s room,” where I found my Indian allies had arrived some days before me.

While pursuing my solitary researches, after my aids had absconded, I was obliged to satisfy myself with such objects of curiosity as lay upon the surface, without any effort to remove obstructions, or excavate among the ruins. There was little to be gained in this way. Moreover, as I have hinted above, there was much discomfort, and no little danger, in remaining alone, as will be seen by the following incident.





DR. STICK BY F. J. SWINTON.

A SITUATION.

LITH. OF G. B. H. BIRCHOTT.

I had swung my hammock, as usual, between two trees, and, having lighted my watch-fires in the open space around, had passed a comfortable night, with no other intrusion than dreams of home, and the musical hum of musquitoes. Very early in the morning, I was startled by a rustling in the thicket near by. Lifting myself up, in some alarm, I was by no means gratified, or quieted, by the appearance of a full grown tiger, creeping stealthily along through the rank growth of grass and weeds, which skirted the thicket, and peering at me, as if he had not yet provided himself a breakfast. Happily, my fires were still burning, and the sight of them brought the intruder to a pause. I seized my gun, and made ready to give him the best reception in my power, in case he should show any disposition to cultivate a further acquaintance. In this situation, certainly not very agreeable to me, whatever it might have been to my unwelcome forest visitor, we remained more than two hours, intently eyeing each other, as if preparing for the deadly contest. They were hours of as painful and absorbing suspense, as any that I ever experienced. I had little doubt that one or the other of us must fall a sacrifice to this ill considered and unexpected meeting. But I was disappointed. Whether it was want of appetite, or a disrelish for the smoke of my watch-fires, or an instinctive apprehension of other fires, and a more distasteful smoke, in reserve for him, I know not, and did not care to ask him. But, after several times changing his position from side to side, as if seeking a favorable point of attack, he slunk away, as cautiously as he came, turning wistfully round several times, in his retreat, as if half resolved not to leave me,

or somewhat suspicious that his escape would be interrupted. I had many misgivings about his return during the day, feeling that I would rather risk such a meeting in my hammock, guarded by the watch-fire than in my solitary and unprotected rambles through the forest.



CHAPTER IX.

VISIT TO THE ANCIENT TOWN OF PANUCO. RUINS. CURIOUS RELICS FOUND THERE.

THE route.—Scenery.—The wild Fig Tree.—Panuco.—Its history.—Present appearance of the town.—Language.—Ruins in the vicinity.—Discovery of the sepulchral effigy.—Description of it.—Situation in which it was found.—Resemblance to figures on the tomb of the Knights Templar.—A conjecture.—An influence.—A conclusion.—Extensive ruins of Cerro Chacuaco, and other places.—Vases found there.—Probably of modern date.

DURING my sojourn in the interior, I made another exploring excursion, in order to visit the ancient town of Panuco; where I was received with the greatest kindness and hospitality, both by the white and the half-breed inhabitants of the place. My route lay along the banks of the river, and across the prairies; the common road being by a bridle path, through the woods, and never successfully travelled, but with the greatest care and watchfulness. The ranchos and milpas, (small farms) assumed a better appearance than was expected; and we passed several fields of ripe corn and cane, owned principally, by Indians. But even

here, every thing, whether Indian or Mexican, wears a primitive look.

Proceeding up the river, which retained its width of half a mile, we found the scenery on either side continually improving as we went, and opening new views of the most picturesque and romantic beauty. I visited many of the Indian huts that lay in our way, the occupants of which were very civil; but it was quite impossible here, as in other places, to convince the people, that acquisition of *gold* was not the object of my visit, —a circumstance which may, perhaps, in some degree, account for the fact, that I could obtain from them so little information respecting the neighboring country.

The wild fig-tree, which bears a small fruit, resembling that of the cultivated tree in Louisiana, grows here to a vast extent and beauty, having, from its wide-spreading branches, suckers, which hang down and touch the ground, where they take root and grow in size equal to the original trunk,—thus giving to the tree, the appearance of a frame house with supporters and rafters. This beautiful tree also resembles the Banyan of South America, and belongs to that class.

There are, likewise, in this vicinity, many other trees of curious and rare growth, some of which, being filled with fruit and blossoms at the same time, present a most unusual and pleasing appearance. Others, adorned with parasitical plants, intertwined with graceful vines and fragrant with flowers, afford a paradise for birds of the most brilliant plumage, and give indescribable richness and beauty to the scene.

Panuco is an old town of the *Huestacos*, and is subject to occasional inundations during the rainy season.

According to Bernal Diaz, this is the place conquered by Cortes, at so great an expense of life and treasure. At the period of the conquest, this was a position of much consequence, as may be inferred from the fact, that the conqueror petitioned Charles the Fifth to add its government to that of New Spain. This request being granted, a garrison was accordingly placed there, and commended to the guardian care of *St. Stephen*,—a name which holds its influence there to the present day. It was the powerful and heroic race of the Huetacos that once dwelt here; a race so hated by the ruthless invaders of Mexico, that, if they had had power to accomplish their fiendish desire, not a vestige of that noble people would have been found remaining. But, even the wasting influences of time, and that desolating bigotry which rioted in the destruction of every thing that was not consecrated, or, more properly speaking, desecrated to the idolatry of Rome, has not been found sufficient to destroy the marks of their genius, or entirely to obliterate the memory of their deeds, and the monuments of their greatness. The remains of pyramids, dwellings, household utensils, ornaments and weapons, all tend to convince me that the arts once flourished upon the spot, where now dwells a listless, idle race of Mexicans, retrograding as the year rolls on, even more rapidly than the decay of the ruins around them.

Panuco is the only town above Tampico, on the Panuco River, and contains only about four thousand inhabitants. It is beautifully located on the banks of the river, in the state of Vera Cruz, about thirty leagues from Tampico, by water, and fifteen by land. It is not laid out with any degree of regularity. The streets of

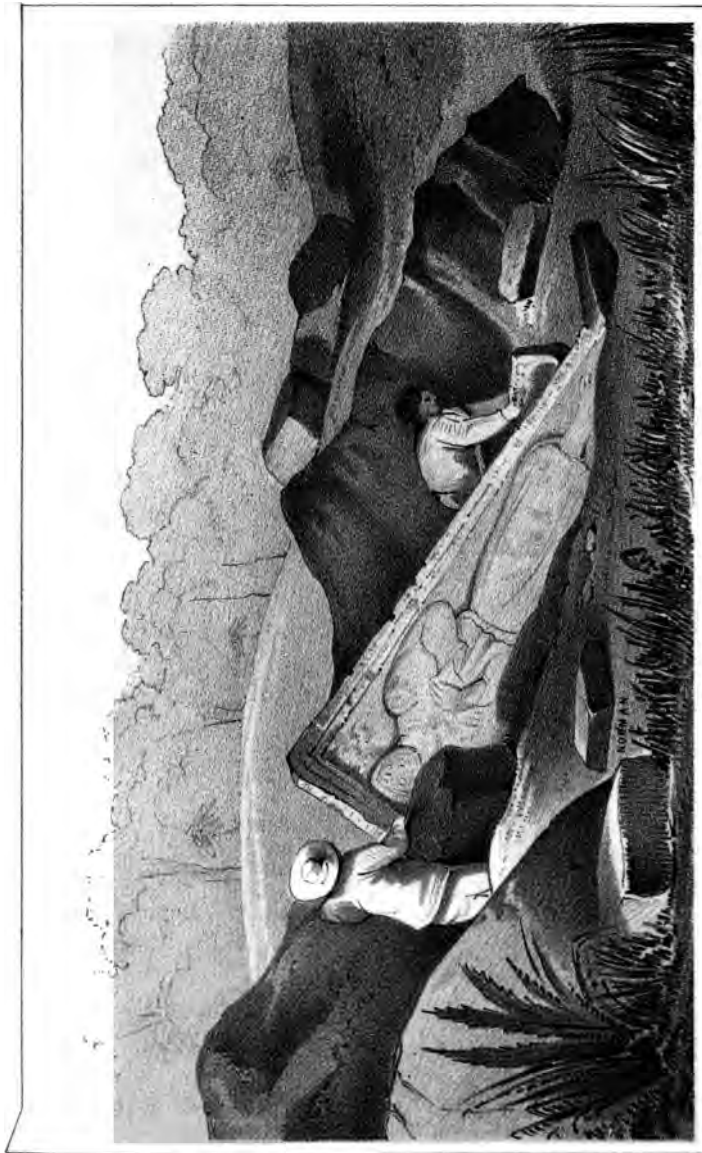
the town look deserted, and wear a melancholy aspect. The houses are of bamboo, with mud walls, which have been once apparently white-washed, and thatched roofs. There are no public buildings, little or no business, and only a few shops, established chiefly for the sale of intoxicating liquors.

The language spoken by the Indians, in this region, might, with much propriety, be termed an amalgamation of many different dialects, in which that of the Huestaco predominates. Father Tapia Zenteno, made an effort to render it into form;—but, he did not succeed very well,—the confusion of tongues being more than a match for his etymological skill. Indeed, I imagine there are few in this region, who would not faint under the task. It might well be taken for a modern representation of Babel, or, perhaps, for an abortive attempt to harmonize the discordant elements of that ancient Pandemonium of Tongues.

The learned Mr. Gallatin, the venerable president of the “New York Historical Society,” and of the “Ethnological Society of New York,” has recently published in the “Proceedings” of the last mentioned body, a dissertation, in which he shows conclusively, that the languages of North and Central America, belong, grammatically, to the same family, however much they may differ in words.

We have reason to be grateful, that the researches of the Antiquarian in our own country, have furnished the lovers of Ethnological lore, with much valuable material for the development of a science which has, within a few short years, arrived at an eminent degree of importance.






LITH. OF G. W. ERBESCHT N. YORK.

THE GREAT RIVER OF THE SOUTH

THE GREAT RIVER OF THE SOUTH

In the vicinity of the town of Panuco, are ruins of ancient places, scattered over an area of several miles. Their history is entirely unknown to the inhabitants; nor do any of them, as far as I could learn, manifest the slightest curiosity to ascertain who were the builders, or in what manner they have been exterminated from their ancient inheritance. I could not discover the trace of a tradition, or conjecture, on the subject, among any of the people, though I sought for it with great diligence.

Several days were employed in exploring this neighborhood, our toils being lightened, occasionally, by the discovery of things new and strange. Among the rest, there was one, which I deem a very remarkable curiosity; so much so, that I shall satisfy myself with presenting that to the reader, as the sole representative of the ruins of this interesting spot. It was a handsome block, or slab of stone, of this form,  measuring seven feet in length, with an average of nearly two and a half in width, and one foot in thickness. Upon its face, was beautifully wrought, in bold relief, the full length figure of a man, in a loose robe, with a girdle about his loins, his arms crossed on his breast, his head encased in a close cap, or casque, resembling the Roman helmet, (as represented in the etchings of Pinelli,) without the crest, and his feet and ankles bound with the ties of sandals.

The edges of this block were ornamented with a plain raised border, about an inch and a half square, making a very neat and appropriate finish to the whole. The execution was equal to that of the very best that I have seen among the wonderful relics of this country,

and would reflect no discredit upon the artists of the old world. Indeed, I doubt not, that the discovery of such a relic among the ruined cities of Italy or Egypt, would send a thrill of unwonted delight and surprise through all the marvel-hunting circles, and literary clubs, of Europe, and make the fortune of the discoverer. The figure is that of a tall, muscular man, of the finest proportions. The face, in all its features, is of the noblest class of the European, or Caucasian race. The robe is represented as made with full sleeves, and falling a little below the knees, exposes the fine proportions of the lower limbs.

This block, which I regarded with unusual interest, and would by all means have brought away with me, if it had been in my power, I found lying on the side of a ravine, partially resting upon the dilapidated walls of an ancient sepulchre, of which nothing now remains but a loose pile of hewn stones. It was somewhat more than four feet below the present surface of the ground, and was brought to light in the course of my excavations, having accidentally discovered a corner of the slab, and the loose stones about it, which were laid open by the rush of waters in the rainy season, breaking out a new and deep channel to the river. The earth that lay upon it was not an artificial covering. It bore every evidence of being the natural accumulation of time; and a very long course of years must have been requisite to give it so deep a burial.

I caused the stone to be raised, and placed in a good position for drawing. The engraving on the opposite page is a correct and faithful sketch of this wonder of ancient American art, as I left it. Those of my read-

ers who have visited Europe, will not fail to notice a resemblance between this, and the stones that cover the tombs of the Knights Templar, in some of the ancient churches of the old world. It must not be supposed, however strongly the *prima facie* evidence of the case may seem to favor the conjecture, that this resemblance affords any conclusive proof, that the work is of European origin, or of modern date. The material is the same as that of all the buildings, and works of art, in this vicinity, and the style and workmanship are those of the great unknown artists of the Western Hemisphere.

According to Gomara, it was customary with the ancient Americans, to place the figure of a deceased king on the "chest" in which his ashes were deposited. Is it improbable, when we take into view the progress which the arts had made among these unknown nations, as evinced by the ruins I have recently visited, and others scattered over all this region, that this "chest" was sometimes, nay generally, of stone? That it was in fact, in the language of oriental antiquity, a sarcophagus? And is it not possible, that the tablet which I have here brought to light, is that of one of the monarchs of that unknown race, by whom all these works were constructed? I am strongly of opinion that it is so, and that a further and deeper exploration in the same vicinity, would discover other relics of the same kind, and open to the view of the explorer, the royal cemetery of one of the powerful nations of Anahuac.

If I am justified in this conjecture,—and it is impossible to convey to the reader any adequate impression of the collateral and incidental evidences, which, to one

on the spot, spring up at every step, to give color and support to such a conjecture,—then may I venture one step farther, and infer that the ruins of this vicinity, are those of a capital city, a royal residence of one of those ancient empires—the seat of its court—the place of the sepulchres of its kings. There is nothing either in the magnitude and extent of the ruins, or in the traces of elaborate art expended in their construction and finish, to throw a shade over such an inference. The area occupied by them is sufficiently vast for the metropolis of any empire, ancient or modern. The ruins are those which might have belonged to palaces and temples, as magnificent and extensive as any that have yet been discovered in the Western World. The style and finish of those that are sufficiently preserved to justify an opinion, are as elaborate and complete, as the most perfect specimens of ancient American art that have fallen under my observation. While the evidences are not slight, that a vast area of similar remains lies buried under the soil, which, for ages has been accumulating upon them, by natural deposit during the rainy seasons, and the gradual abrasion of the adjacent mountains.

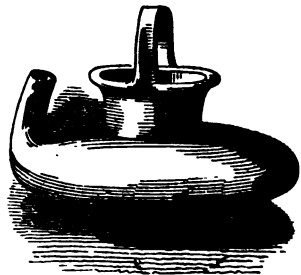
If the above inference be deemed admissible, it cannot be thought extravagant to conclude, that these ruins are of very ancient date, and belong to the history of a people, much older than any respecting whom we have any authentic records—a people who had probably passed away before the era of the Spanish conquest. It seems to me impossible to come to any other conclusion. And I cannot avoid expressing my surprise, at the apparent ease with which some writers have arrived at a different result. As an argument on the subject

may not be acceptable to all my readers, I will not cumber this part of the work with any further speculations, but reserve them for a closing chapter, which can be omitted by those whose minds are made up, or who do not feel interested to go below the surface, in order to unravel the enigmas of time.

There are other ruins, situated south of Panuco, at the distance of about three leagues. They are known as the ruins of "Cerro Chacuaco." They are represented as covering an extent of about three leagues square, with unquestionable evidence that they were all comprised within the bounds of one vast city. I may also mention those of "San Nicholas," distant five leagues on the south west, and those of "A la Trinidad," about six leagues in nearly the same direction. There are also other ruins, of which I obtained some information, at a still greater distance. Indeed, it would appear that the whole region is full of them, on every side—melancholy memorials of the immense numbers, as well as of the mighty power and wealth of the ill-fated race, that once flourished here. As far as I could rely upon the information received, all these ruins present the same general features, as those which I have already described. It is probable that they all belong to the same period, and were built by the same race; and the evidence is clear to my mind, that that race was much more ancient, and further advanced in the arts of civilized life, than any of the American races now remaining, or any whose history has come down to us.

It was among the ruins of "Cerro Chacuaco," that the two vases represented below, were found. They are made of the common clay of the country, well wrought

and handsomely formed, and could not have been made as they are, without some mechanical contrivance. The head on the first and larger one is decidedly that of the negro, with low, retreating forehead, flat nose, and thick lips. From this circumstance, I should judge it to be of recent origin, as there is no evidence that any of the African race were ever found in America, till they were introduced there as slaves in the sixteenth century. The natives, degraded as they are at the present day, are not unskilful in the manufacture of pottery, for common uses; and these, though of a higher finish than any that I have seen there, might have been lost, or left among the ruins, by some passing traveller. I am the more inclined to this opinion, from the circumstance that the people here take no interest whatever in examining the ruins, and would never think of going beneath the surface, to find anything that might be buried under them. I therefore conclude that these must have been found in some open place, above ground, where they could not have lain many years, without crumbling into decay.



CHAPTER X.

DISCOVERY OF TALISMANIC PENATES.—RETURN BY NIGHT TO TAMPICO.

SPECULATIONS upon the images.—Superstitious reliance of the natives upon them in seasons of sickness.—Blending of idolatries.—Clue to the solution of a great problem.—Far-fetched theories.—The New World peopled from the Old.—Similarity in the objects and forms of worship, good evidence of similarity of origin.—Peculiar ugliness and obesity of many of the idols of Asia.—Ugnee, of Hindostan.—Gan, of China.—Fottei, of Japan.—Conclusion to be drawn from these facts.—Confirmed by the claims of the Chinese to the first discovery of America.—Still further by the analogy between the languages of America and those of Tartary.—Predilection of idolatry for ugliness.—Return by night to Tampico.—Rumors of war.—French retailers.—Mexico backing out.

IN the course of my explorations among these interesting and melancholy relics of by-gone ages, I discovered two very singular and grotesque looking images, which have given rise to no little speculation in my own mind. I have the pleasure of presenting, at the close of the chapter, correct drawings of these to the reader. The originals are deposited in the museum of the New York Historical Society. I had little doubt, when I

discovered these images, that they once figured in the idolatrous worship of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country; but what place to assign them in that mysterious Pandemonium,—whether to call them god or devil, whether to class them with the deities that preside over the affections, or to give them rank with those of a more intellectual character, I have been utterly at a loss to conjecture. I have been somewhat inclined, of late, to lean to the opinion that they belong to the former class, as I found images of the same kind in use among the Indian women, who wore them suspended about their necks, and attributed to them something like a talismanic influence. They are especially relied upon in seasons of sickness,—but, whether supposed to have power to frighten away, by their pre-eminent ugliness, the ugliest shapes of disease, or to conciliate the genius of health, by awakening his sympathies for the dreadful ills which flesh is heir to, and the monstrous deformities in human frame, which are often the result of disease,—or whether the contemplation of them is intended to sustain and solace the sufferer, in any condition, however lamentable and hideous, to which she may have been reduced, by keeping continually before her eyes the representation of one more hideous and lamentable still, I was not able to determine; nor is it, perhaps, material to the interests of science or religion, or the melioration of suffering humanity in a more enlightened age, and among more civilized races of men, that this point should be settled beyond the possibility of a doubt; since it is by no means probable, even if it could be proved, by the most incontestable evidence of numberless personal certifi-

cates, and well authenticated cases of positive relief, or almost miraculous cures, that the ladies of our day, and in our highly favored country, could be induced to substitute them for the infallible, health-imparting, life-restoring panaceas, catholicons, medicated lozenges, sugar-cruſted pills, vegetable anodyne reſtoratives, medicinal rejuveneſcent cordials, magnetic rings, *et id omnes genus*, whose name is legion, promiſing immortal life and beauty to all who are ſo fortunate as to ſecure a ſeaſonable ſhare of their influence. It was not with any view to ſet up an oppoſition to this well diſciplined army of the inveterate and the veteran enemies to the continued reign of death and diſeaſe in our world, that I brought home with me ſome of theſe remarkable images: nor is it with any hope of raiſing a ſucceſſful competition with regularly-educated, duly licensed and long eſtabliſhed phyſicians, whether of the old ſchool or the new, whether they adminiſter their homœopathic infinitesimals upon the point of a cambric needle, or ſhovel in their allœpathic doſes by the cart-load, that I have ventured upon this learned and profound diſquiſition upon the remarkable diſcovery, which it was my fortune to make. And I beg leave here to give due and ſolemn notice to all the world, that, if this ſingular accident ſhould chance to be the means of introducing a new epoch in American therapeutics, I hold myſelf, my heirs, executors, adminiſtrators and assigns, utterly and for ever exempt from all and ſingular the conſequences and reſults thereof.

In the preſent uſe of theſe talismanic images, there is a very ſingular, and, I am inclined to think, an un-

examplified blending of the old pagan idolatry of the Indians, with the image worship of their newly adopted religion. They are all, as the reader is no doubt aware, regarded as converts to the Christian religion, under the instruction of the Priests of the Church of Rome. They are, for the most part, very scrupulous in observing all the customs and requirements of that church. The images I here refer to are hollow, with a small aperture near one of the shoulders. They are filled with balls, about as large as an ordinary pea, which are supposed to have been made of the ashes of victims sacrificed, in former days, to these gods. In this manner they were consecrated to demon-worship. Whether, in their present accommodation to a species of Christian idolatry, these balls are regarded as a substitute for "beads," or as "relics" of martyrs to a faith in an "unknown god" and an unknown form of worship, I am unable to say. I only know that the images, with their contents, are regarded with a profoundly superstitious interest, and relied upon in seasons of peculiar peril.

It may, perhaps, be thought, that I am making too much capital out of a very trifling circumstance, if I should say, that in the course of my meditations upon these ugly little demons, I imagined I had found in them, the means of solving one of the great problems which have divided and perplexed philosophers, ever since the discovery of our continent. But I deny "the soft impeachment;" I protest strenuously against the unkind imputation. If the falling of an apple led Sir Isaac Newton to the discovery of one of the great first principles and fundamental laws of nature,—if the clatter-

ing of the lid of his mother's tea-kettle, unfolded to the inquisitive mind of Watt, the powers and mysteries of *steam*, that semi-omnipotent agent in the affairs of our little world,—if the earth's profile, as sketched on the disc of the moon in an eclipse, convinced the sagacious mind of Columbus, that he could get round on the other side, without danger of falling off,—who shall presume to say, that this discovery of a pair of ugly little personages, belonging to the system of idol divinities of an unknown race of people, will not prove to the inquiring mind of some other, though less profound philosopher, the clue by which the great mystery of their origin shall at length be effectually solved ?

I will not answer for it, that my theory in this case shall be as far fetched, ingenious or elaborate, as many others that have gained the favor and support of learned and worthy names. I only engage to make out as good a case as some of my predecessors in the same wide field ;—those, for example, who have undertaken to show that the aboriginal inhabitants of America, are the descendants of Abraham and probably the lost ten tribes, who were carried away into Assyria, in what is termed the first captivity under Shalmaneser. These learned theorists have considered their case fully, and incontestably made out, when they have discovered ten words in a thousand of the language, to bear some distant, and, in many cases, fanciful resemblance to words of the same import in the ancient Hebrew ; or when they have traced, in their religious rites and usages, some slight analogies with the imposing ceremonials of the Mosaic ritual. In drawing their sage conclusions from these attenuated premises, they have not troubled them-

selves to consider what an overwhelming effect it would have upon their theory, to weigh the nine hundred and ninety words in a thousand, which have not the most distant resemblance to the Hebrew, or the multitude of idolatrous rites, and heathenish mummeries, which were utterly and irreconcilably at variance with the spirit and letter of the ancient Scriptures. It is easy enough to make a theory, and to support it manfully, as long as you can keep your eyes shut to every fact that militates against it. But alas! the great majority of such creations vanish as soon as the eyes are opened, even as the pageant of a dream vanishes before the morning light.

But, not to lose sight of my own good theory, let us return to my little images, and to the thoughts which they have suggested, in relation to the long agitated, and still unsettled question of the origin of the first inhabitants of this continent. In the first place,—I take it for granted, that the new world, as it is called, was peopled from the old. For, no one who takes the Bible as his guide, will suppose that more than one pair was created, or doubt that the residence of that first pair, and their immediate descendants, was in Asia. And if any one rejects the testimony of the Bible, my argument is not intended for him.

In the second place,—it will be admitted that a close correspondence in the forms of worship, and in the appearance and character of the objects of worship, is one of the best grounds for supposing a similarity of origin in any two races of people. There is scarcely any thing of which nations are more tenacious, and by which they can be more safely recognized and identi-

fied, than the forms and ceremonies of their religion. Strange and inexplicable as it is, they change oftener and more easily in matters of *Faith*, than in matters of *Form*. Nearly three thousand years ago, it was laid down as a principle not to be questioned, that the religion of a people, especially of idolaters, was not liable to sudden and voluntary change. *Pass over the isles of Chittim and see, and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be any such thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.*

Now, to bring these principles to bear upon the object I have in view, let it be observed,—First, that, in the mythology of all the pagan nations, in Asia, many of the idols they worship, are the most monstrous and hideous deformities imaginable. Ugliness, in every conceivable shape, is deified. Secondly,—some of the ugliest of these deities are distinguished for their obesity. Thirdly,—as an example of these, take *Ugnée*, the regent of fire, among the Hindoos, who is represented as a very corpulent man, riding on a goat, with copper colored eye brows, beard, hair and eyes. His corpulency is held by the Brahmins, as an indication of his *benevolence*, and his readiness to grant the desires of his worshippers. Fourthly,—among the idols of China, some are described as monstrous figures, hideous to behold. Among the number is *Gan*, who has a broad face, and a prodigious great belly. Fifthly,—*Fottei*, who is sometimes called *Miroku*, one of the best, and most prominent of the Japanese deities, is represented with the same deformity, a huge distended belly.

Another circumstance, not inapposite to our purpose is this, that the worshippers of *Miroku*, in Japan, expect to receive from his benevolent assistance, among other good things, *health*, riches, and *children*.

Now, put these facts together, and associate with them the facts of the existence of similar images of worship among the natives of America, and of the reliance of those natives upon them for aid in times of sickness, and will it not go far to prove a positive relationship between them and the inhabitants of Hindostan, China, or Japan? I trust no one will presume to dispute it, after the pains I have taken, and the learning and research I have displayed in proving it. The problem of ages may be considered as settled. It is no longer a vexed question.

The reader will be pleased to observe, that the Japanese god *Miroku*, is expected to give to his votaries *health* and *children*. Does not this last circumstance bear with unanswerable weight and significancy, upon my position; and prove, beyond the possibility of doubt or peradventure, that the Aborigines of America, emigrated from Japan? The images which I have discovered, and which form the subject of this erudite disquisition, are worn, as I have before remarked, by the *women* of America, in the time of sickness. Now, it is an established fact, that, in all nations and in all ages, the one great and laudable desire of woman is, that she may be blessed with children. For this she suffers, and for this she prays. The reliance, therefore, of the women of Japan and the women of America, upon these ugly-looking, corpulent little demons, to assist them in attaining this one prevalent, paramount desire,

establishes the sameness of their origin, and leaves no lingering doubt in my mind, and, of course, none in the mind of the intelligent and candid reader, that, wherever the *men* of those almost exterminated races may have come from, they certainly brought their *wives* from Japan.

If it were desirable to go farther to prove my point, I might allude for strong confirmation, to the fact, as laid down in an old writer, that the Chinese claim to have discovered America, more than two hundred years before Columbus attempted to cross the Atlantic. It was in the year 1270, that China was overrun by the Tartars; and it is given out, that a body of one hundred thousand inhabitants, refusing obedience to their new masters, set sail, in one thousand ships, to find a new country, or perish in the enterprise. The origin of Mexico is thus accounted for. And nothing is more natural than to suppose, that, in making up so magnificent an expedition, they would find some of their Japanese neighbors desirous to accompany them.

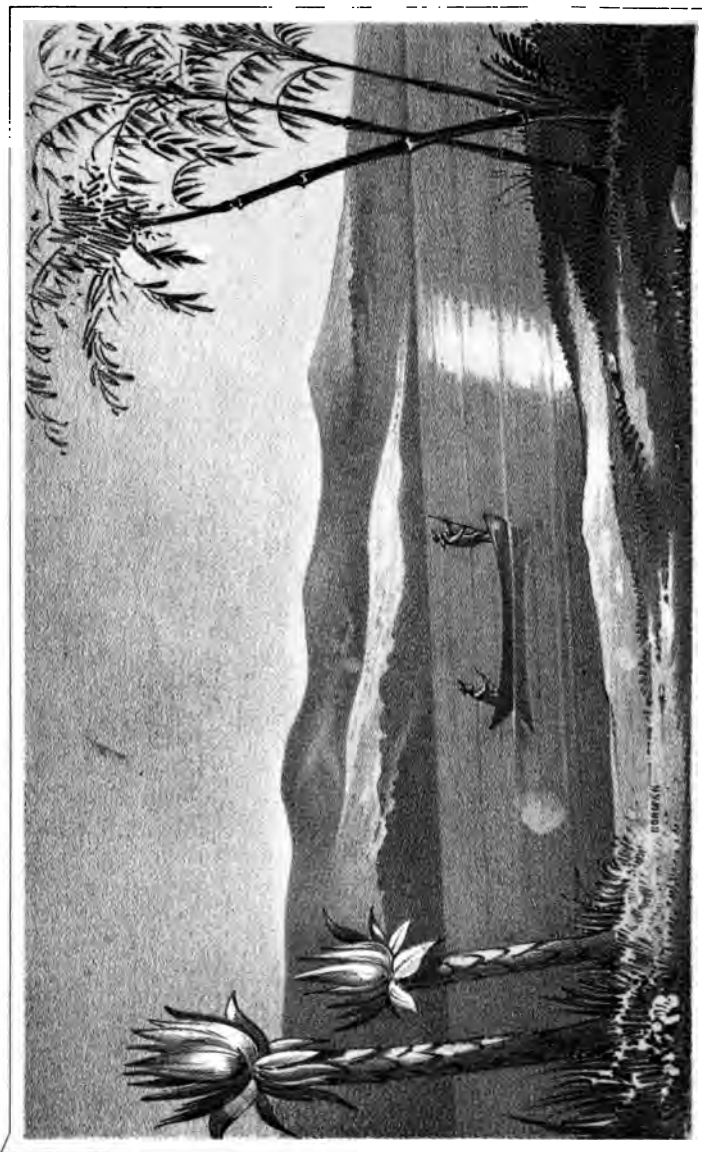
In addition to this, the learned philologists, who have investigated the languages of the Aboriginal nations, with a view to tracing their origin, have found, in the names of places and things, many striking correspondencies with the language of Japan. And Barton, one of our own countrymen, has published a very elaborate treatise on the subject, in which he undertakes, and, as he thinks, successfully, to prove, that the language originally spoken in both the Americas, are radically one and the same with those of the various nations, which are known by the general name of Tartars.

Having got my hand in, and feeling somewhat

encouraged by the singular success of the above triumphant philosophical disquisition, I am strongly tempted to trespass upon the patience of the reader, while I proceed to inquire into the probable reasons why the worshippers of idols, who have the choosing of their own gods, so generally delight in those of grotesque and ugly shapes, and unseemly proportions. Since our fellow-creatures, even our wives and our children, are loved and cherished in proportion as they are rendered lovely to the sight by the graces of form, feature, complexion and expression, how happens it that those objects of adoration, who are supposed to preside over and control the interest and destinies of men, in all their relations to each other, and the dearest objects of their affections, should be clothed in forms of the most unnatural and disgusting appearance? But I forbear.

I had passed several days among the ruins of Panuco. They were days of unusual mental excitement, and bodily fatigue. There was enough around me to occupy and interest me many days longer. But I was unprepared for the investigation. I had gratified, but by no means satisfied, my curiosity; and my attention was now necessarily turned from the sepulchres of the dead, towards the dwellings of the living. I gathered up my little stock of relics, consisting chiefly of idol images, found among the dilapidated temples and dwellings of the departed, and, with no little difficulty, conveyed them in safety to "the lady's room." Taking a last farewell of this apartment, and of the friends who entertained me there, I betook myself again to my canoe, bestowing my little demons carefully in





the bottom, and covering them with my hammock, and other travelling apparatus. The voyage down the river was as quiet and beautiful as can be conceived. The greater part of it was performed at night, under favor of a full moon, through fear of being surprised by the natives, who, in that event, either from superstition or jealousy, would, no doubt, have deprived me of my small collection of idols.

I arrived at Tampico in the early part of April. Mine host of the French Hotel was as ready to receive me, as on my first arrival in the city, and his "accommodations" were equally inviting. The city was in a state of considerable excitement, in consequence of the daily expectation of the declaration of War by France. The Mexican Congress had, sometime before, passed a law, forbidding any foreigner to carry on a retail business in Mexico, after a certain specified time, on peril of confiscation. This law deeply affected the interests of a considerable number of Frenchmen, who, under the protection of the previous statutes, had established themselves in the country, investing their little all in the retail business. It was, in fact, a decree of banishment, without any alleged fault on their part, and with the certain sacrifice of all their property.

The day arrived when the invidious law was to go into effect. The French retailers, acting under instructions from their government, and a promise of protection in any event, took a careful inventory of their goods, locked up their stores, placed the keys, with the certified inventory, in the hands of their Consuls, and waited the result. It was a quiet and dignified movement on the part of France, a sort of silent defiance

which could not be misunderstood. But it was amusing to witness the different effects of this state of things, upon the different classes of French residents. Some of them, with an air of perfect nonchalance, as if fearing no power on earth, and knowing no anxiety beyond the present moment, improved the season as a holyday, a sort of carnival extraordinary, devoted to visiting, dancing, and all kinds of sports. Others, of a more mercurial temperament, blustered about the streets, flourishing their arms with the most violent gesticulations, scowling fearfully, swearing huge oaths of vengeance, and seemingly taking the entire affairs of the two nations into their own hands. It was a windy war, And sure I am, if the Mexican rulers had seen the fuming, and heard the sputtering of all these miniature volcanoes, they would have felt the seat of power tremble beneath them.

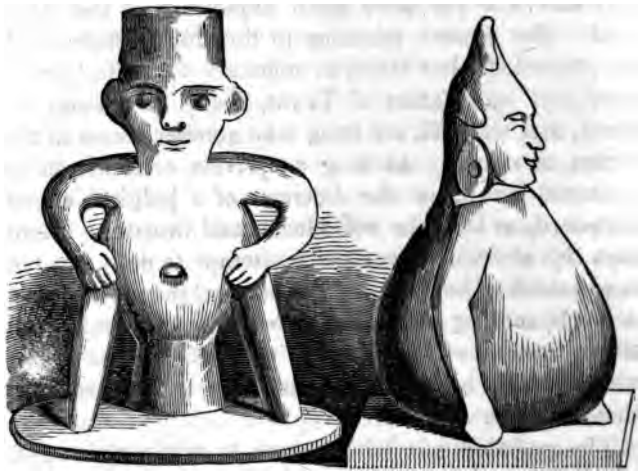
The result of this movement proved, as thousands of similar movements have done before, that "wisdom is better than weapons of war." The Mexicans were completely *non-plus'd*. The offensive law was not violated in any case, and they had no handle for a further act of oppression. The foreign residents only stood on the defensive, and thus put the government in the wrong. They felt their position, and made a precipitate retreat. After a few days of awkward dalliance, they issued new instructions to the local authorities, informing them that they had misinterpreted the law, and misunderstood its purport. It was thus virtually abrogated, and the business of foreigners has since been suffered to flow on in its ordinary channels.

It is not, perhaps, quite as awkward a matter for a *nation to back out* from the position it has deliberately taken with reference to another, as for an *individual* to find himself compelled to do the same thing with reference to his antagonist. The responsibility is divided among so many—the body politic having no soul of its own—that there can be little, if any, personal feeling in the matter. And patriotism, which is a personal virtue wherever it exists, has generally so little to do with such movements, that we leave it out of the question altogether. But, agreeable or disagreeable, backing out is the only safe course, where the weak have given offence to the strong. It is a position and a movement that poor, divided, distracted Mexico, has become quite familiar with. And there is good reason to apprehend that she will yet have more experience of the same kind. Her present relations to the United States, and the ground she has taken in reference to the independence and annexation of Texas, leave little room for doubt, that she will, ere long, take another lesson in the tactics of retreat. As long as private ends are to be promoted by it, or the interests of a political clique advanced, so long she will bluster and threaten. More than this she will never even attempt to do. For the most selfish of her political leaders, and the most violent of her blustering patriots, knows too much to stake his all, and the all of his country, upon the cast of a die, which might, by possibility, turn up a war with the United States.

The probability is, with regard to this very law, of which I have before spoken, that it was never intended to go into full effect. It was a mere money-getting

experiment—a contrivance to levy black mail, in the name of the state, upon the foreign residents. They took it for granted, while passing the law, that the parties against whose interests it was aimed, would at once propose to buy off, and that large bribes would be offered to secure exemption from its effects. And the only chagrin they experienced, in finding themselves out-generaled by a sagacious adversary, arose from the necessity of relinquishing the expected booty.

But let me not longer detain the reader from his promised introduction to the Talismanic Images, the ugly little divinities of the ancient dames of Anahuac. *Ecce Dii Penates !*



CHAPTER XI.

EXCURSION ON THE TAMISSEE RIVER. CHAPOTÉ, ITS APPEARANCE IN THE LAKES AND THE GULF OF MEXICO.

ONCE more in a canoe.—The Tamissee river.—Fertility of its banks.—Wages on the plantations.—Magnificent trees.—Mounds on Carmelote creek.—entertained by a Yankee.—Character and condition of the people.—The Chapoté.—Observed on the lakes in the interior of Mexico.—Seen also in the Gulf.—Article in Hunt's Merchants' Magazine.—Speculations of the writer upon the Gulf Stream.—Supposed connection with the Pacific ocean.—Objections to this theory.—Another view of the matter.—Insects.—Return to Tampico. The city in mourning.

IT was not enough for me to know that I had *arrived* at Tampico. I soon became uneasy; and, being desirous to make the best use of my time, my thoughts were immediately turned upon resuming my paddle in some other direction. Accordingly, in the evening of an early day, I found myself once more in a canoe, with an Indian for a companion, going up the Tamissee River, for the purpose of visiting the creeks that empty into it at different points, and of ascertaining what ruins might be found in their vicinity.

This river rises at the foot of the mountains near Victoria, and falls into the Panuco at Tampico. It is navigable about forty leagues, for any vessel that can pass the bar, at which the depth of water is only eight or nine feet. The average depth of the stream is eight fathoms,—and a ship of a hundred guns, might haul up close to the side of its banks. This river rises and falls but little, and there are no towns situated upon its margin. Its crystal waters are well stocked with fish, of various kinds. The scenery, on either side, is exceedingly beautiful, opening occasionally, as you pass along, the most picturesque landscapes, and then completely embowering you in the shade of the luxuriant trees, that overhang the stream.

The borders of the Tamissee, with a soil of exceeding richness and fertility, are under Indian cultivation, and supply the market of Tampico with fruit and vegetables. The plantain is in great request there, and plantations for cultivating it are numerous and extensive. Its growth is luxuriant, and its flavor particularly rich and agreeable. Sugar cane grows almost spontaneously, and in such abundance that credulity itself is staggered at the thought. One planting, without further care or labor, is all that it requires of human attention, for fifteen or twenty years. I measured a cane which had been planted nine years. It was vigorous and thrifty, as if of last year's planting, had grown to the enormous length of twenty-one feet, and exhibited forty-five joints. The product of the juice, though not perhaps in full proportion to the size of the plant, is much greater than that of the ordinary cane. Thirty-two gallons of the juice will yield no less than twelve

pounds of sugar. This is considered only a fair average. That this gigantic cane is in very tall company, will be seen from the fact that the bamboo, which I have often measured, grows to the height of sixty feet.

Wages, on these plantations, including the amount of one dollar allowed in rations of corn, are seven dollars per month, which, if properly husbanded, and prudently expended, would afford a comfortable subsistence to the laborer. But the Indians, who perform all this kind of labor, are, as I have before had occasion to remark, proverbially lazy and shiftless. Great difficulty is experienced, in all this country, in keeping them steadily at any kind of work. To find one of them so industrious and thoughtful, as to have any thing in advance of the absolute wants of the day, would be matter of astonishment. They work only when they are hungry, and stop as soon as they are fed. The instincts of nature alone can rouse them to make any exertion, unless compelled by some superior force, or a contract from which they cannot escape.

The price of the ordinary sugar, in this vicinity, is only about two cents per pound; but the clay-clarified is worth from twelve to fourteen cents, a price which, it would seem, would amply remunerate the manufacturer. And yet I do not know of an establishment of the kind in any section of this country. If any enterprising Yankee should take the hint, and realize a fortune in the enterprise, I trust he will bear in mind, as he retires, that "one good turn deserves another."

In pursuing my different routes through the woods.

and along the water courses, of Mexico, I have often been struck with the immense size, and luxuriant foliage of the trees. The Banyan, or wild fig, in particular—of which I had occasion to take some notice before—with its numerous gigantic trunks, propping up its great lateral branches, from which they had originally descended in slender suckers, often covers an immense area. Possessing within itself the material for a vast forest, it presents to the beholder a magnificent and imposing spectacle. From some points of view, when favorably situated, it has the aspect of a vast natural temple, with its “long drawn aisles” and its almost endless colonnades supporting a roof overgrown with trees, and walls hung with clustering vines. The gloomy recesses within, would seem a fitting altar-place for the bloody rites of that dark idolatry, which once overshadowed these beautiful regions.

The fan palm, called here *palma real* or royal palm, rises from seventy to eighty feet in height. It is a magnificent tree, and whether seen in clusters, or alone, is always beautiful. With its tall straight trunk, and its richly tufted crown of fringed leaves, waving and trembling in every breath of air that stirs, and glistening in the sun with a beautiful lustre, it has a glory and a grace peculiar to itself. It was so abundant in this region, at the time of the conquest, that the Panuco was then called the Rio des Palmas, the River of Palms. A great variety of other trees are met with here, of magnificent size and splendid foliage, waving their brilliant branches in the breeze, and presenting strong inducements to the traveller continually to pause in wonder and admiration. In good sooth,

it may be said that "man is the only thing that dwindles here."

Having hauled up under a tree, made fast our canoe, and spread my blanket over me, I passed a comfortable night, as I had often done before, in the same primitive way. In the morning, I continued on my way two or three leagues farther up the river, where I found ruins, similar, in their general character, to those I have already described. They covered a considerable space, and were buried in some places, beneath masses of vegetable mould, and in others, overgrown with trees of immense size and great age. I wandered up and down among them, for a considerable time, sometimes cutting my way through the thick forest, and sometimes clambering over piles of broken stones, and long dilapidated walls, till I was quite weary with my labors. But I made no discoveries of sufficient interest to require a particular description. Every thing was so utterly ruinous, that it was impossible to trace out the lines of a single building, or determine the boundaries of the city, in any direction.

Some distance farther up, on Carmelote Creek, there are other ruins, in the midst of which there are seventeen large mounds, of a somewhat peculiar construction. Though in a pretty good state of preservation, I found that the walls were not built of stone. I penetrated one of them to some distance, but discovered nothing but earth and mortar, and broken pieces of pottery, with a few rude specimens of carved images, cut in concrete sandstone. Some of the latter were as large as life. One of these I brought away with me ; also several fragments of Penates, some of which

are represented in the engraving at the close of this chapter.

The mortar in these mounds seems to have been placed in layers at the bottom of the walls, but for what purpose I could not discover. It was not used as a cement, for, as I have said, there were no stones to be cemented. It was my opinion that these mounds were erected as places of burial, but there were no bones to be found, nor other traces of human remains.

At night, I came to a house, which seemed more like home than any thing I had seen in Mexico. The very sight of it was refreshing to the traveller. The arrangements were all made with good taste and judgment, and a due regard to comfort. The grounds were pleasantly laid out, and beautifully ornamented with trees and flowers. On inquiry, I learned, as might have been expected, that this inviting looking place was built and occupied by a thriving Yankee, who had brought with him to Mexico his good notions of husbandry and house-keeping. He gave me a hearty welcome to his house, and entertained me, for the night, with the greatest kindness and hospitality. If there were a few more such hospitable, home-like resting-places, distributed here and there among these interesting regions, it would be vastly more agreeable and comfortable to the jaded traveller, who attempts to explore their time-honored ruins.

The native Mexicans, in these parts, are an indolent, haughty, overbearing race. Still adhering to the barbarous policy of old Spain, they hold the people of every nation except their own, however much they may be in advance of them, in utter contempt. They are deci-

dedly the most disagreeable class of people in this country. There is little intelligence or information among them. Education is at a very low ebb. There are some bright exceptions to this general remark; but they are lamentably few and far between. Whether a good school-master would be well sustained in this region, is a question which I am not prepared to answer; but certain I am he would find ample scope for the exercise of his vocation—a native soil wholly unoccupied, except with weeds.

In pursuing my adventures, I stopped frequently at the different *milpas* that lay in the way; but nothing like thrift or comfort was any where visible. A rude hovel with mud walls, and a single room, is all they aspire to, in the way of a dwelling. The land is rich and fruitful to excess, and the lounging, listless Indian is the only insurmountable obstacle to its profitable cultivation and improvement. In the hands of our southern planters, or of the sturdy farmers of the northern and western states, this whole region would become a paradise of perennial fruits and flowers, and teem with the golden treasures of every clime under heaven.

In some of the fresh water lakes, in the interior, the "chapoté," a species of asphaltum, is found bubbling up to the surface. When washed upon the borders, it is gathered, and used as a varnish upon the bottoms of canoes. It has a peculiar pungent smell, like that of liquid asphaltum, and possesses, I think, some of its qualities. I have observed a remarkable phenomenon, of the same kind, out of sight of land, in the Gulf of Mexico, where the waters bubble up in the same manner, and accompanied with a similar smell. There can be

no doubt that the ebullition and effluvia observed in the Gulf, are the effect of the same cause, which produces the asphaltic substance on the surface of the Lakes.

This Asphaltic deposit in the Gulf, it appears, has attracted the notice of others, and from it a theory has recently been formed, to account for that hitherto unexplained, or not satisfactorily explained phenomenon, the Gulf Stream. The article appears in the August number of Hunt's Merchant's Magazine. As I had remarked upon the circumstance before that article was published, and furnished my remarks to the writer, as a confirmation of his statements, each of them having been made without a knowledge of the other, I think it not amiss to present, in this place, the substance of his theory, and the reasons upon which it is founded. I shall then have an opinion of my own to present, which differs materially from his.

The opinion of the writer is, that the Gulf Stream is not caused by the trade winds forcing into the Caribbean Sea, between the South Caribbee Islands and the coast of South America, a large quantity of water which can only find vent into the North Atlantic, by the Florida channel. In his view, there are serious objections to this theory. First, the water in the Gulf Stream is hotter than that of any part of the Atlantic, under the equator, and therefore it cannot be that, which supplies this never failing current. Secondly, the water of the Stream is hotter in deep water, where the current begins, or rather where it has become regular and strong, than it is in the Gulf, on soundings, where there is little or no current, indicating that it comes not from the shores, but from the bottom in deep water.

Thirdly, the appearance, in the Gulf, of bubbles of asphaltum constantly rising to the surface, and spread over it for a considerable distance. It has been collected in quantities sufficient to cover vessels' chains, and other portions of the equipments. It is of a bituminous character, offensive to the smell, and becomes hard on exposure to the sun, forming a durable varnish, and doing better service on iron than any paint.

Fourthly, the volume of the Gulf Stream is sometimes so great, that the Florida channel is not sufficient to give it outlet, and the excess passes off to the south of the Island of Cuba. This has been noticed to such an extent, that vessels, in sailing across from Cape Catoche, the eastern extremity of Yucatan, to Cape Corientes or Antonio, are often driven by it very much to the eastward of their course. It is manifest that such a current could not exist, if the Gulf Stream were supplied by waters driven from that direction, as the two currents would counteract and destroy each other.

From these premises, the inference of the writer is, that nothing less than an ocean subsidiary to the Atlantic could supply the immense quantity of water, which is continually flowing out of the Gulf, with the force of an independent stream. And because this portion of the Atlantic is separated from the Pacific only by a narrow Isthmus, and the water in the Pacific is known to be constantly higher than that in the Atlantic, a passage under the Isthmus would necessarily create a powerful current. This passage he supposes to exist, to afford the supply necessary to keep the Gulf Stream perpetually in action. And, as the regions through which the supposed passage is formed, are known to be volcanic, the supposi-

tion accounts for the high temperature of the water, as well as for the force of the current.

With regard to the temperature of the water in the stream, it is stated, that its average, off the Capes of Florida, is 86° , and in latitude 36, it is 81° ; while the mean temperature of the atmosphere, under the equator, is 74° , and of the water of the Atlantic, in the same place, not above 60° . It appears, then, that the water of the Stream, in passing out of the Gulf is some 26° hotter than that of the ocean, which, under the old theory, is supposed to supply it.

There is an error, either of the author, or of the printer, in these figures. The temperature of the Gulf Stream is correctly given; but he has evidently placed that of the ocean under the tropics, too low. It does not materially affect his argument, however, since it is undoubtedly a fact, notwithstanding the assertions of another writer, who has undertaken to reply to the article in question, that the water of the Gulf Stream, after it leaves the tropics, is warmer by some degrees, than the average of any part of the ocean under the tropics. On this point, the argument in Hunt's Magazine will not, I imagine, be controverted.

The suggestion, that the water which constitutes this stream, is derived from the Pacific, forced by its superior elevation there, through a subterranean passage, across or under the Isthmus, is certainly original, and ingenious. But, to my view, it is liable to as many objections, as the old one which it is intended to displace. It is indeed, as the writer says, a bold conjecture, having nothing to support it, except the volume of water required for the constant supply of the

great stream, and the asphaltic ebullition, which first suggested the theory, and gave rise to the discussion. Both these circumstances, I imagine, can be disposed of in a very satisfactory manner, without resorting to the supposition of this mysterious communication between the two great oceans.

It is, in my view, a serious objection to the above-named theory, that there is no evidence whatever, on the Pacific coast, of any such submarine discharge of its surplus waters, as is here supposed. The natural, and almost inevitable effect of such an offlet would be the formation, at the place of discharge, of a mighty whirlpool, another Maelstrom, whose wide sweeping eddies would gather into its fearful vortex, and swallow up in inevitable destruction, whatever should venture within the reach of its influence. Whether such a phenomenon exists on that coast, I do not know; but it certainly is not described in any geography, nor laid down on any atlas, which has ever fallen under my notice.

Another objection, almost, if not quite as fatal to this "bold conjecture," is the fact, that upon the established and well known principles of hydrostatic pressure, a discharge, such as is here supposed, could not long continue without reducing the two oceans to the same level. The immense volume of the discharge which requires such a conjecture to account for it, would surely, in the long course of ages, exhaust the surplus in the Pacific, and then the stream would cease to flow. So that the fact of the Pacific still maintaining its elevation, would seem to be conclusive evidence that no such equalizing communication exists.

It may be further argued against this new theory, and it seems to me with great plausibility, that the appearance of the "chapoté" on the surface of the inland lakes, demonstrates the inconclusiveness of the main inference, on which the theory is based. Wherever the supposed subterranean passage may be, the volcanic fires, which are supposed to heat the water, and to furnish the asphaltic element, must necessarily lie below it; while the passage itself must, with equal certainty, lie below the bottom of the lakes. Now, if the asphaltic ebullition finds its way up through the lakes, would it not, certainly, and from necessity, carry the water along with it? And should we not expect to find a jet of salt water in the midst of the lake, or such an infusion of salt as to change the character of the lake?

If it be replied to this, that the level of the lake is higher than that of the sea, another, and equally formidable difficulty will result. For, as water must always find its level, through the same opening by which the asphaltum rises, the water of the lake would inevitably leak out, and lose itself in the mighty current.

While, therefore, I am, equally with the writer in the *Merchants' Magazine*, dissatisfied with the old theory of water from the south, forced into the Gulf by the trade winds, and compelled to find a northern outlet—which, from the nature of the case, the formation of the land, and the ordinary phenomena of the seas where it is held to originate, appears, at the first blush, absurd and impossible. I am constrained to say that his "bold conjecture" deserves no better name than he has

given it. My own view of the case is, that the true cause of this singular phenomenon must be sought in the bottom of the Gulf itself—in a perpetual submarine volcano, which, like a gigantic cauldron, is for ever sending up to the surface its heated currents, mingled with bituminous ebullition from the heart of the earth. I have taken some pains to examine the water in the immediate vicinity of these asphaltic bubbles, and have found it always considerably warmer than in any other part of the Gulf. It did not occur to me then, to compare it with the known temperature of the stream, after it is formed into a current; but I have no doubt that it will be found so to agree, as to afford substantial confirmation to these views.

Neither the ebullition here spoken of, nor the idea of submarine volcanoes in the Gulf, is intended to be presented as any thing new. The former was observed, and commented upon, by several of the early voyagers, who followed in the track of Columbus, more than three hundred years ago. It was then attributed to the existence of volcanic fires beneath the bed of the ocean. The latter is an opinion long since put forth, by some shrewd observer, I know not whom, in whose mind the insuperable objections to the old theory created a necessity for another and a better. Whether it is the true one, it is perhaps impossible for human sagacity to say. But that it is far more plausible, and more consistent with all the known facts in the case, than the other, I think, cannot be denied.

The insects in this region are inconceivably numerous and annoying,—so much so, that I was actually compelled to relinquish my researches; not however,

until I had very little reason to anticipate any thing more of interest.

Thus defeated, I changed my course; and, turning the head of my canoe towards home, was once again in Tampico, but apparently not in the same city, of that name, which I had so recently left, to perform my pilgrimage to the cities of the dead.

The place was enveloped in deep mourning. The shops were closed, colors were hanging mournfully at half-mast, and the officers of the Mexican army were engaged in suspending effigies in various parts of the town, on which the zealous population might vent their pious spite. It was Good Friday; and the effigies thus exposed to the brunt of a well meant, but harmless popular indignation, were intended as representatives of Judas Iscariot.



CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL VIEW OF MEXICO, PAST AND PRESENT. SKETCH OF THE CAREER OF SANTA ANNA.

ANCIENT Mexico.—Its extent.—Its capital.—Its government.—Its sovereigns.—The last of a series of American Monarchies.—Some evidences of this.—Great antiquity of some of the ruins.—Population of Mexico.—Its government as a colony.—The Revolution.—Its leaders.—Iturbide.—Distracted state of the country.—Santa Anna.—His public career.—Pedraza.—Guerrero.—Barradas at Tampico.—Defeated by Santa Anna.—Bustamente.—Pedraza again.—Santa Anna made President.—Revolt of Texas and Yucatan.—Battle of San Jacinto.—Santa Anna a prisoner.—Released, returns in disgrace.—Out again.—Loses a leg.—Dictator.—President.—Put down by Paredes.—Banished.—Probable result.—The Press.—Departure for home.

HANGING Judas Iscariot in effigy, eighteen centuries after he had hung himself in despair for his treachery, and raising a monumental tablet to Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, seemed to me to be somewhat incongruous amusements. But these Mexicans will have their way, however strange it may be. Leaving them to choose for themselves, in these matters, I propose, before taking

leave of Tampico, to give a brief sketch of the history and present condition of Mexico, and of the career of the singular man, who has acted so prominent a part in the revolutions which have recently convulsed that unhappy country.

The ancient Mexico was comprised within much narrower limits, than those which now bound the Republic. Yet, owing to the remarkable formation of the country, beginning with its low plains, and tropical valleys along the sea board, and gradually ascending, plateau above plateau, into the region of perpetual winter, it embraced every variety of climate, and yielded almost every production, that was known on the face of the earth.

In the midst of one of the most beautiful and luxuriant plateaus, situated midway between the Atlantic and the Pacific, and measuring a little more than two hundred miles in circumference, with lofty, snow-crowned walls on every side, stood the Queen City, Tenochtitlan, now called Mexico, the metropolis of the Aztec empire, the seat of civilization, of art, of luxury, of refinement—"the Venice of the Western world." It was founded in the early part of the fourteenth century, and soon became the seat of a flourishing empire, and the central point of power to a triad of nations. Mexico, Tezcuco, and Tlacopan, bound together by a league of perpetual amity, which was faithfully maintained and preserved through a long period of unexampled warfare, subdued to their united sway, all the neighboring tribes and nations of Anahuac. In process of time, the power and influence of Mexico overtopped that of its confederates, and Tezcuco and Tlacopan

became little better than tributaries to the central empire of the Montezumas.

The government of this ancient empire was an absolute monarchy, and was maintained in a style of truly Oriental pomp and magnificence. Their monarch supported his state with all the proud dignity, and stately ceremonial of the most refined courts of the old world. His attendants were princes, who waited on him with the most obsequious deference. The form of presentation was much the same as now prevails in the royal saloons of Europe, the subject never presuming to turn his back upon the throne, but carefully stepping backward to the door, in retiring from the royal presence. Whether this circumstance is sufficient to prove that Europe was peopled from Mexico—an opinion gravely put forth, and sturdily maintained, by at least one old writer—I shall not now stop to inquire.

The body-guard of the sovereign was composed of the chief nobles of the realm, who, like the great feudal lords of Europe, held sway over extensive estates of their own, and could call into the field, at any moment, an immense army of subject retainers. The royal palaces were extensive and magnificent, and comprised apartments, not only for the private accommodation of the royal household, but for all the great purposes of the state—halls of council, treasuries for the public revenue, etc. etc. Mexico was indeed a city of palaces, interspersed with temples and pyramids, rivalling in splendor and luxury, as well as in extent, many of the proudest capitals of the Old World.

This splendid monarchy, which was probably at the very acme of its glory, when discovered and overturned

by the remorseless invaders from Spain, was the last of a series of powerful and highly refined dynasties, that had successively flourished and passed away, in the beautiful regions of Central America. Two mighty oceans on the east and west, two mighty continents on the north and south, and embracing, in the singular arrangement of its slopes and levels, all the climates and productions of both and of all, it seems to have been, for ages, we know not how far back, the theatre of all the art, the seat of all the power, the centre of all the refinement and luxury, of the western hemisphere. There are some remarkable works of art, and wonderful traces of ancient civilization in South America, as well as some singular remains of a once numerous and powerful people in the north. But the Isthmus was the Decapolis of Ancient America. "The tabernacles of its palaces were planted *between the seas*, in the glorious mountain." Here was its Babylon, its Nineveh, its Thebes, its Palmyra. And here, splendid in ruins, with no voice to tell of their ancient founders, or of the millions who once thronged their busy streets, they still remain, an instructive but painful lesson on the instability of human affairs, the brevity of a terrestrial immortality.

I have said that Mexico was the last of a series of splendid monarchies that had flourished, and passed away, in Central America. The evidences of the truth of this statement are too numerous, and too clear, to admit of a doubt. The ruins of extensive and magnificent cities, which abound on every side, like the sepulchres and monuments of the departed, are the melancholy memorials, which cannot be gainsayed, of

the gigantic power and fruitful resources of the Past. Palenque, Copan, and many more in the south—Uxmal, Chi-chen, Ticul, Kabah, Mayapan, etc., in the central regions of Yucatan—Panuco, Cerro Chacuaco, and others without a name, in the north—these are but a part of the remains of ancient grandeur that lie buried under the soil, and hidden in the almost impervious forests of this luxuriant clime. Their name is legion. Some of them were deserted and in ruins at the period of the Spanish Conquest, and are occasionally spoken of by the historians of that day with wonder and amazement. Some were evidently occupied by other races than the builders, inferior in taste and refinement, if not in physical power; and some, though not then in utter ruins, were, as at the present day, waste and without inhabitant,—

Desolate, like the dwellings of Moina,—
The fox looked out of the window,
The rank grass waved round its head.

In the remains of these ruined cities, there are not only the evidences derived from their different degrees of dilapidation and decay, to prove that they originated in different and far distant ages, but others which show them to be the works of distinct races of people. The plan and architecture of the buildings, the style and finish of the ornamental parts, the forms and features of the sculptured heads, differ as widely as those of Egypt and Greece, and as clearly prove the workmanship of different periods, and different artists. Some writers have undertaken to trace in these ruins, evidences of three distinct ages of American civilization.

Without entering into an argument on the subject, I would simply remark, that, whether three, or five, or more, no conclusion seems to my mind capable of a more perfect substantiation, than this, that these ruins extend far back into the remotest ages of antiquity, and form a continuous chain of connection between the earliest settlers in America, and the Toltecs and Aztecs, of whom we have something like authentic history. I go farther, and say that this chain is probably complete in its parts, though the links are separated, and cannot now be brought together again. They are all there, but so scattered and confounded together, that he who attempts to assign them a place and a date, or to build a theory upon their apparent relations to each other, will probably soon find himself "in wandering mazes lost," and rather amuse, than convince or instruct his readers.

These statements are, for the most part, drawn from the most reliable sources, and confirmed, as far as I have had opportunity, by my own observation. I shall take the liberty to regard them as facts. Intending to refer to them in the concluding chapter, and to draw from them some inferences in support of the opinions I have formed respecting the origin of the ancient American races, and the probable epoch of the ruins I have had the pleasure to explore, I shall make no further comment upon them here; but proceed to a brief epitome of the present condition of the empire of the Montezumas.

The population of Mexico is as mixed and various as that of any other portion of the globe. It includes, at least, seven distinct races. First, the Europeans, or

foreign residents, called Chapetones, or Gapuchins. Secondly, Creoles, or native whites of European extraction. Thirdly, the Mestizoes, the offspring of whites and Indians. Fourthly, Mulattoes, the offspring of whites and blacks. Fifthly, the Aboriginal Indians. Sixthly, Negroes. Seventhly, Zamboes, or Chinoes, the offspring of negroes and Indians. There is also a sprinkling of Chinese and Malays, and natives of the Canaries, who rank as whites, and are known by the general name of Islenos, or Islanders.

While Mexico remained a colony of Spain, from the conquest in 1519, till the Revolution in 1810, all the power and influence, and nearly all the wealth, was confined to the first class. The revolution transferred it to the second, and expatriated the first. And this was almost its only result; for it does not seem to have been attended with any of the ordinary blessings of freedom to the common people, either in lightening their burdens, or elevating their moral condition.

The government of the colony was that of a Viceroy, the proud servant of a proud master in Spain, and amenable only to him for his acts. The people had no voice either of council or remonstrance. It was passive submission to absolute power. Whether that power became more severe and oppressive, in the early part of the present century, than it had been, or whether the increased numbers, wealth and ambition of the Creoles induced a desire to take the power into their own hands, or whether it was the mere contagion of rebellion and independence, diffusing itself over a continent reserved as "the area of Freedom," and separated

by wide oceans from the despotisms of the Old World, it is not easy now to decide. The struggle was long and severe. Monarchy held on to the golden mountains of Mexico with a desperate though feeble grasp. Independence was declared, by the congress of Mexico, in 1813, but it was not finally and fully achieved until 1829, when the Spanish residents were expelled from the country.

The contest for independence, as is usually the case, brought out the patriotism, talent and genius of the native population. Several of the leaders distinguished themselves in the eyes of the world. Among the most prominent were Guerrero, Hidalgo, Moreles and Victoria.

In 1820, the Viceroy, who was still struggling to support the tottering throne, commissioned General Iturbide, who had been successful in several engagements with the Creoles, to reduce them to submission. Iturbide was born to be a traitor. No sooner was the army placed at his control, than he betrayed his trust, joined the cause of the revolutionists, and proclaimed Mexico independent. This was in 1821. A congress assembled in 1822, to form a constitution. But Iturbide, traitor to the cause he had just adopted, caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor, under the title of Augustin the First. Opposed by a powerful and resolute party, rendered desperate by their success hitherto, this self-constituted Emperor was compelled to abdicate in the course of a year, and retire to Europe, the proper theatre for legitimate tyrants. Returning to Mexico in 1824, with a view, as was supposed, to avail himself of the distractions of the country, to assert anew his claims to

the imperial dignity, he was seized and shot, as soon as he had landed.

From the first outbreak of the Revolution to the present time, Mexico has been torn and distracted with internal wars. The long struggle for Independence, was succeeded, as soon as that end was achieved, by other and more bitter struggles for personal or party ascendancy. A constitution was adopted in 1823. The government established by it, is a confederated Republic, modelled in most respects, after that of the United States—a government exactly suited to make an intelligent and virtuous people happy, but not adapted to a community composed of restless, unprincipled, ambitious factionists, on the one hand, and an ignorant, bigoted rabble, on the other. Faction after faction has arisen, plan after plan has been proposed, adopted, and instantly discarded for another, till it has become as difficult to say what is, or has been at any particular period, the actual government of Mexico, as to predict what it will be to-morrow. If the intelligence of the people had been such as to justify the comparison,—if there had been more real patriotism, more sincere love of liberty among the principal actors in these bloody dramas, one might say, that the Florentine Histories of the middle ages had been re-enacted in Mexico. How different the struggle, both in its manner and in its results, in our own blessed land. But let us not triumph over our less favored and weaker neighbors. Let us rather devoutly thank heaven that our fathers loved liberty more than power, and laid broad and deep the foundations of intelligence, virtue and religion,—not superstition, and a bigoted devotion to forms, or a blind

submission to ecclesiastical authority, but the religion which recognizes God as supreme, and all men as equal,—on which to raise the glorious superstructure of rational freedom. Let us see to it, that, while we enlarge the superstructure, we do not neglect the foundations.

It was during the temporary ascendancy of Iturbide, that Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, now more notorious than illustrious, became a conspicuous actor on this turbulent stage. He was a native of the department of Vera Cruz. Here, without enjoying any adventitious advantages of birth or family, he succeeded, by his talents and industry, in securing great local influence, and gradually rose to wealth and power. Except Bolivar, there is, perhaps, no one among the many distinguished agitators of Spanish America, whose career has been signalized by so many extraordinary vicissitudes of good and evil fortune, or who has filled so large a space in the eye of the world, as Santa Anna.

On the promulgation by Iturbide of the plan of Iguala, (February 24, 1821,) Santa Anna, at the head of the irregular forces of the neighborhood, succeeded by a *coup de main*, in driving the Spaniards out of Vera Cruz, of which he was immediately appointed governor. The Spaniards, however, still held the castle of San Juan de Ulloa, from which they were not for a long time dislodged; and, of course, Santa Anna's position was one of great importance.

Meanwhile, differences arose between Santa Anna and the Emperor Augustin, who had come down to Jalapa to direct the operations against the Spaniards. Santa Anna repaired to Jalapa to confer with Iturbide;

and, being treated harshly, and deprived of his command, immediately left Jalapa, hurried back to Vera Cruz, in anticipation of the intelligence of his disgrace, raised the standard of revolt, and, by means of his personal authority with the troops of the garrison, commenced hostilities with the Emperor. Thereupon Guadalupe Victoria, whose name was endeared to the Mexicans by his previous unsuccessful efforts in the revolution, and who was living concealed in the mountains, emerged from his hiding place, called around him his old republican companions in arms, expelled Iturbide, and established the Mexican republic with a federal constitution, in imitation of that of the United States.

Santa Anna, who, by first taking up arms, had contributed so largely to this result, thinking himself not duly considered in the new arrangements, sailed from Vera Cruz with a small force March 1823, and landing at Tampico, advanced through the country to San Luis Potosi, assuming to be protector of the new republic. But not possessing influence enough to maintain himself in this attitude, he was compelled to submit to the government, and to remain for several years in retirement at Manga de Clavo.

The termination of Victoria's presidency, however, in 1828, enabled Santa Anna to re-appear on the stage. Pedraza had been regularly elected President; on hearing of which, Santa Anna rose in arms, and by a rapid march, seized upon and intrenched himself in the castle of Perote. Here he published a plan, the basis of which was to annul the election of Pedraza, and confer the presidency on Guerrero. But, being successfully

attacked here by the government forces, he was compelled to flee, and took refuge in the mountains of Oajaca, to all appearance an outlaw and a ruined man. The signal of revolution, however, which he had given at Perote, was followed up with more success in other parts of the country.

Pedraza was at length driven into exile, Guerrero was declared President in his place, and Santa Anna was appointed to the command of the very army sent against him, and to the government of Vera Cruz, and after the inauguration of Guerrero, April 1829, he became Secretary of War.

While these events were in progress, the Spanish government was organizing its last invasion of Mexico. Barradas, the commander of the Spanish forces, landing at Tampico, July 27, 1829. Santa Anna was entrusted with the command of the Mexican troops, and at length compelled the Spaniards to capitulate, September 11, 1829, which put an end to the war of independence.

Guerrero had been in office but a few months, when another revolution broke out. The Vice-President, Bustamente, gathered a force at Jalapa, and pronounced against Guerrero, December 1829, who was at length taken prisoner, and executed for treason; Bustamente assuming the presidency.

Santa Anna, after feebly resisting, had at length joined, or at least acquiesced in, the movement of Bustamente; and remained in retirement for two or three years, until, in 1832, he on a sudden pronounced against the government, compelled Bustamente to flee, and brought back Pedraza from exile. to serve out the

remaining three months of the term for which he had been elected to the presidency.

In the progress of events, Santa Anna had now acquired sufficient importance to desist from the function of President maker, and to become himself President. This took place in May, 1833. His presidency was filled with pronunciamientos and civil wars, which produced the consummation of the overthrow of the federal constitution of 1824, and the adoption, in 1836, of a central constitution.

Though most of the Mexican States acquiesced in the violent changes, by which they were reduced to mere departments, under the control of military commandants, Texas on the northeast, and Yucatan on the southeast, refused to submit to the military dominion of whatever faction of the army might happen to hold power in the city of Mexico : and Santa Anna at length took command in person of the army organized for the reduction of Texas. The battle of San Jacinto, the capture of Santa Anna, his release by Houston on conditions, which he afterwards refused to fulfil, his visit to this country, and his subsequent return to Mexico, are events familiarly known in the United States.

When Santa Anna marched on Texas, first Barragan, and then Coro, exercised the functions of the presidency for a while, until, under the new constitution, Bustamente, having returned from exile, was elected President ; the temporary unpopularity of Santa Anna, and his retirement in disgrace to Manga de Clavo, having left the field open to the friends of Bustamente.

Sundry *pronunciamientos* followed ; of which, one of

the most dangerous, headed by Mejia, gave to Santa Anna the opportunity of emerging from his retirement. He vanquished Mejia, and caused him to be shot on the field of battle. This exploit gave to Santa Anna a new start in public affairs; so that when the French Government, in 1838, resolved to punish Mexico for its multiplied aggressions on the subjects of France in Mexico, and proceeded to attack Vera Cruz, the command of the Mexican troops were committed to Santa Anna. On this occasion he received a wound, which rendered the amputation of one of his legs necessary; and his services, at this time, seemed to have effaced, in the eyes of the Mexicans, the disgrace of his defeat at San Jacinto.

Santa Anna took no part in the unsuccessful movement of Urrea against Bustamente, in 1840; but in 1841, there broke out a revolution, commenced by Paredes, at Guadalajara, into which Santa Anna threw himself with so much vigor and zeal, that Bustamente was again compelled to flee, and the plan of Tacubaya, with the agreement of La Estanzuela, was adopted; in virtue of which, the constitution of 1836 was abolished, and Santa Anna himself was invested with the powers of dictator, for the purpose of re-constituting the republic.

Under these auspices, and amid all the calamities of a protracted but unsuccessful attempt to reduce Yucatan to submission, (for Yucatan at length made its own terms,) a new constitution was adopted, June 13, 1843, entitled, "Basis of Political organization of the Mexican Republic," and Santa Anna was elected President.

Santa Anna resigned his dictatorship, and entered upon office as the new President, in January, 1844; but before the expiration of the year, Paredes again pronounced at Guadalajara, and this time against Santa Anna. The chief ostensible causes of this movement, were various administrative abuses committed by Santa Anna and his ministers, and especially an abortive attempt of his administration to raise money for an expedition against Texas. When the revolution broke out, Santa Anna was at Magna de Clavo, the presidency being provisionally held, during his absence from the capital, by Canalizo. Instantly, on hearing the tidings of the movement at Guadalajara, Santa Anna, in open violation of one of the articles of the new organic basis, was placed in command of the army, and rapidly traversed the republic, from Jalapa to Queretara, with all the forces he could raise, to encounter Paredes. But the departments which he had left behind him speedily revolted, not excepting even Vera Cruz; and though his faction in the capital, including Canalizo and the ministers, endeavored to sustain him by proclaiming him dictator, their efforts were vain. He was compelled to retrograde, and at length was routed, and obliged to surrender himself a captive to the new administration, headed by Herrera, which has released him with the penalty of ten years' exile.

Defeated, banished, and in disgrace with the world, it is still difficult to determine what will be the ultimate fate of this hero of half a score of revolutions. He is now, or, more properly speaking, he was when last heard from, living in luxurious retirement, on one

of the most splendid estates in Cuba, a few miles from Havana. With immense wealth at his command, ambitious as ever of power, he is but waiting a favorable opportunity to thrust himself again into the quarrels of his ill-fated country. Money will accomplish any thing there, good or evil. And if, through any of his emissaries, he can once more gain access to the army, one year's income from his rich estates will buy them over to a new revolution, and the exiled dictator will once more place his wooden foot upon the necks of his conquerors, and of the people. This *may* be his position before the expiration of the present year. It may be, before the ink is dry which records the peradventure. It may be, at this very moment. "*Nous verrons ce que nous verrons.*"

Of literature, properly speaking, there is none in Mexico. There are a few scholars and learned men, in the church and at the bar. But their presence is not felt, their weight is not realized, in any estimate we attempt to make of the national character.

Veytia, a native of Puebla, who flourished about the middle of the last century, has done much to illustrate the early history of the nations of Anahuac; tracing out, with great patience and fidelity, the various migrations of its principal races, and throwing much light on their history and works. He was an industrious able critic, and though but little known, deserves the highest credit for his valuable contributions to ancient American literature.

Clavigero, a native of Vera Cruz, a voluminous and elaborate writer on the same subject, whose works are well known and highly approved, has rectified many of

the inaccuracies of foreign writers, and done much to concentrate the scattered rays of native tradition, and give form and substance to previous antiquarian researches.

Antonio Gama, a native of Mexico, and a lawyer, was a ripe scholar, distinguished for patient investigation, severe accuracy, and an impartial desire to arrive at the truth, without reference to a preconceived opinion or theory. He was a thorough master of some of the native languages, and, to an extent as great as the nature of the case admitted, of the native traditions and hieroglyphics. These, together with their systems of arithmetic, astronomy and chronology, he has illustrated with uncommon acuteness and ability. His works are but little known, but of great value to those who would follow a safe guide amid the labyrinths of antiquarian lore.

Other worthy names might be added to these. But let these suffice to show that there is nothing in the climate unfavorable to letters. It is a rich, a glorious field; but, trampled by tyranny, or convulsed with revolutions and civil wars, there has scarcely been a moment, during the present century, when the scholar, however much disposed to retirement, could close the door of his study, and feel himself secure from interruption. It is hardly fair, therefore, to measure the literary capacity of Mexico, by its present fruits, or to judge of her scholars by the issues of the Press in such turbulent times.

There are but few newspapers in the country, and these are not conducted with the most consummate ability. The bombastic, bragadocio style, with which

they are often inflated, if it be not intended for capture, might almost vie with Baron Munchausen's piest specimens of that kind of composition. The comments of the government organ, published at the tal, are often extremely bitter upon every thing relates to the United States. In some remarks reing the monument commemorating the battle of B Hill, the editor observes,—“The people of Boston much ado about its completion”—and then adds, Mexico should raise monuments for all such t occurrences in her history, the whole country wot filled with them.” A little farther on, speaking c Peninsular War, he says,—“they may do—but lington never yet knew what it was to face a b work of Mexican bayonets.”!!! Alas! for Wellir and the glory of British arms! What was Wa to San Jacinto!

On preparing to leave Tampico, I experienced siderable difficulty, and no small expense in proc the necessary passports. Stamps, for permits of gage, were required. My baggage had to unde very annoying examination, with a view to the di ery of specie that might be concealed therewith, w pays an export duty of six per cent. To such a voking extent is this examination carried, that the lent officers thrust their hands, like Arabs, into the toms of your pockets, in pursuit of your small change.

I took passage in the Mexican schooner *Belle Is* for New Orleans, in company with twenty other sengers. We embarked in the river, and, th hoping for a short passage, it was with sensatio

discomfort, amounting almost to consternation, that I ascertained, after every thing was on board, that water and provisions had been laid in, sufficient only for a passage of forty-eight hours. After protesting to the American Consul, and lodging my complaint with the Captain of the port, against the villainous purpose of the master and consignee of the vessel, to put us upon allowance, and experiencing much delay, some further supplies were sent on board. We remained in the river some time, being unable to pass the bar, in consequence of the shallowness of the water in the channel. The annoyances experienced from the vermin, with which the vessel abounded, and the motley character of the passengers, made up of negroes, mulattoes, and Mexicans, rendered my position quite intolerable; and even sickness, which filled up the measure of my troubles, was a not unwelcome excuse for parting with such disagreeable associates.

This affords me a favorable opportunity, and I embrace it with heartfelt pleasure, of paying, in part, a debt of gratitude to Captain Chase, the American Consul at Tampico, and his accomplished and kind-hearted lady, who, during a severe and protracted illness, attended me with a kindness that will not soon be forgotten. The tender and patient attentions, which they bestowed upon a sick countryman, in a strange land, were such as might have been expected from a brother and sister, and were rendered doubly valuable to the recipient, by the full hearted cheerfulness and benevolence which characterized them. God bless them both! May they never want a friend and comforter in any of the trials that may fall to their lot.

More fortunate in my next attempt to leave Tampico, I secured a passage in the Pilot Boat Virginia, and, after a short and agreeable voyage, arrived at the Crescent City on the 8th of June, satisfied, for the present, with my adventures, and glad to greet the kind faces of familiar friends, and share the comforts which can only be found at home.

At home! yes, here I am once more, in my own quiet home, having performed three voyages by sea, embracing a distance of some two thousand miles, besides sundry rambles and pilgrimages in the interior, and all this, with only two "hair-breadth 'scapes by field or flood"—scarcely enough, I fear, to spice my narrative to the taste of the age.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TWO AMERICAN RIDDLES.

HUMBOLDT'S caution.—Antiquities of the Old World long involved in mystery, now explained. Ancient ruins never fully realized by description.—The two extremes of theorists.—A medium.—My own conclusion.—Reasons for it.—1. Absence of Tradition.—Necessity and importance of tradition.—Most likely to be found among the Aztecs.—An attempt to account for its absence.—Answered.—The Toltecs and their works.—A choice of conclusions.—2. Character and condition of ruins.—Widely different from each other.—The works of different and distant ages.—Probable origin of the people.—One universal tradition, its relevancy to the question.—Variety of opinions.—Variety of ancient works.—Conclusion.

THE great problems of the origin of the American races, and of American civilization, though volumes have been written upon them, are yet unsolved. Whether, according to the inquisitive and sagacious Humboldt, we ought to regard it as lying “without the limits prescribed to history, and even beyond the range of philosophical investigation,” or whether we may look upon it as still open to the examination of those who are curious in ancient lore, must be determined rather by the ultimate result of our discoveries, and of the speculations based

upon them, than upon the exaggerated notions of the difficulty of the question, which the first confused revelations of the travelled enquirer may seem to suggest.

I am by no means convinced in my own mind, that this question is one which cannot now be reached, or which must be looked upon as every year receding farther and farther from our grasp. The antiquities of the old world, buried for so many ages in midnight oblivion, had remained through a long course of centuries, the standing enigma of Time. With the help even of some imperfect records from the archives of ancient history, and the aid of what seemed to be a fair line of tradition, the origin and purpose of many of them, and the hidden meaning of their hieroglyphical embellishments, had continued to be an inexplicable mystery quite down to our own times. Much learned investigation, from acute observers, and profound reasoners, had been expended upon them, without arriving at any satisfactory result. And yet, after all, the nineteenth century has expounded the riddle. The lapse of ages, instead of scattering beyond recovery the dim, uncertain twilight that hung about these august monuments of the solemn Past, has miraculously preserved it, as it were embalmed by a magic spiritual photography, to be concentrated into a halo of glory around the brow of Champollion. May it not be so with the now mysterious relics of the ancient races of America?

It may be remarked, and I think the remark cannot fail to commend itself to the good sense of every reflecting mind, that no description, however perfect, or however faithfully and ably illustrated by the art of the engraver, can convey any adequate idea of the charac-

ter of these ruins, or furnish, to one who has not seen them with his own eyes, the basis of a rational argument upon their origin. Were it possible to transport them entire to our own fields, and reconstruct them there, in all their primitive grandeur and beauty, it would not help us to solve the mystery—it would not convey to us any just notion of what they have been, or what they are. To be realized and understood, they must be studied where they are, amid the oppressive solitude of their ancient sites, surrounded with the luxuriant vegetation and picturesque scenery of their native clime, the clear transparent heaven of the tropics above them, and their own unwritten, unborrowed associations lingering dimly about them.

There are two errors, lying at the two extremes of the broad area of philosophical inquiry, into which men are liable to fall, in undertaking the discussion of questions of this nature. The one leads to hasty conclusions upon imperfect, ill-digested premises; the other shrinks from all conclusions, however well supported, and labors only to deepen the shadows of mystery, which hang about its subject. One forms a shallow theory of his own, suggested by the first object he meets with on entering the field—or, perhaps borrows that of some equally superficial observer who had gone before him, or even of some cloistered speculator, who has never ventured beyond the four walls of his own narrow study—and, clinging to it with the tenacity of a parental instinct to its first born impression, sees nothing, hears nothing, conceives nothing, however palpable and necessary, that will not illustrate and aggrandize his one idea. The most convincing proofs are

lost upon him. Demonstration assails him in vain. He started with his conclusion in his hand, and it is no marvel if he comes back as ignorant as he went, having added nothing to his argument, but the courage to push it somewhat more boldly than before.

Another enters the field, thoroughly convinced that it is impossible to come to any conclusion at all. He fears to see any thing decisive, lest it should compel him to favor an opinion. He dreads an object that suggests a definite idea, lest it should draw him perforce to support some tangible theory. He stumbles blindfold over palpable facts, and clearly defined analogies, and converses only with shadows. His philosophy consists in leaning to whatever embarrasses a conclusion, and following only those contradictory lights, which perplex the judgment, and prevent it from arriving at a precise and positive inference.

Unsafe as it is to trust to the guidance of a mere theorist, there is little satisfaction in attempting to follow the timid lead of the universal doubter. Is it not possible to find a medium course?—to proceed with philosophic prudence and caution, taking due heed to all our steps, and yet to look facts and analogies boldly in the face, listen fearlessly to all their suggestions, collate, compare, and digest every hint and intimation they put forth, and venture, without exposing ourselves to the uncharitable imputation of dogmatism, to form and express a definite opinion? If any thing would deter *me* from so bold a step, it would be the formidable array of eminent names in the list of the doubters. When so many of the wisest have given it up as hopeless, it requires no less courage than skill to assume to be an

Œdipus. But, having already, on a former occasion, been driven to a positive inference from the narrow premises afforded by the question, and being answerable therefor at the bar of public criticism, I have less at stake than I should otherwise have, upon the opinion which I have now to offer.

I am free to acknowledge then, that the impressions formed by my first "rambles" among the ruined cities of Yucatan, have been fully confirmed by what I have now been permitted to see in Mexico. I am compelled, in view of all the facts and analogies which they present, to assign those ruins, and the people who constructed them, to a very remote antiquity. They are the works of a people who have long since passed away, and not of the races, or the progenitors of the races, who inhabited the country, at the epoch of the discovery.

To this conclusion I am led, or rather driven, by a variety of considerations, which I will endeavor to state, with as much brevity and conciseness as the nature of the case will admit.

The first consideration to which I shall allude, in support of the opinion above expressed, is the absence of all tradition respecting the origin of these buildings, and the people by whom they were erected. Among all the Indian tribes in all Central America, it is not known that there is a solitary tradition, that can throw a gleam of light over the obscurity that hangs about this question. The inference would seem to be natural and irresistible, that the listless, unintellectual, unambitious race of men, who for centuries have lingered about these ruins, not only without knowing, but with-

out caring to know, who built them, cannot be the descendants, nor in any way related to the descendants, of the builders. Tradition is one of the natural and necessary elements of the primitive stages of society. Its foundations are laid deep in the social nature of man. And it is only because it is supplanted by other and more perfect means of transmission, as civilization advances, that it is not, always and every where, the only channel of communication with the past, the only link between the living and the dead. In all ages, among all nations, where written records have been wanting, tradition has supplied the blank, and, generation after generation, the story of the past has been transmitted from father to son, and celebrated in the song of the wandering bard, till, at length, history has seized the shadowy phantom, and given it a place and a name on her enduring scroll. This is the fountain head of all ancient history. True, it is often so blended with the fabulous inventions of poetry, that it is not always easy to sift out the truth from the fiction. Still, it is relied upon in the absence of records : while the very fable itself is made subservient to truth, by shadowing forth, in impressive imagery and graceful drapery, her real form and lineaments. What else than fable is the early history of Rome ?

Now, if these ruins of America are of comparatively modern date, if, as some have undertaken to show, they were constructed and occupied by the not very remote ancestors of the Indian races who now dwell among them, in a state of abject poverty and servitude, is it reasonable, is it conceivable, that there should not *be found* a man among them acquainted with their

ancient story, claiming affinity with their builders, and rehearsing in song, or fable,

The marvels of the olden time ?

With these splendid and solemn reminiscences always before their eyes, with all the hallowed and affecting associations that ever linger about the ancient homes of a cultivated people,—the temples of its worship, the palaces of its kings and nobles, the sepulchres of its founders and fathers, always present and constantly renewed to their minds, is it possible they could, in three brief centuries, forget the tale, and lose every clue to their own so gloriously illustrated history. I cannot admit it. I cannot conceive of it.

The attempt to lay aside, or narrow down, this argument from tradition, or the absence of it, in order to arrive at an easy explanation of the mystery of these ruined cities, appears to me to be unphilosophical in another point of view. If I understand aright the character and history of the people who once flourished here, this is just the region, and they are just the people, where this kind of evidence would exist and abound. The Aztecs were a highly imaginative and poetical people. The picture writing, which prevailed among them, and in which they had attained so high a degree of perfection, was precisely the material on which to build traditionary lore, and cultivate a taste for it among the common people. It was the poetry of hieroglyphics—a national literature of tropes and figures. It selected a few prominent comprehensive images, as the representatives of great events. Strongly drawn and highly colored, these would impress themselves

powerfully on the minds and memories of the people, and be associated with all that was dear to their hearts. Their personal histories, their family distinctions, their national pride, would all be involved in them, and all have a part in securing their faithful preservation and transmission. Inexhaustible fountains of national song and poetical fable, they would be recited in their public assemblies, and handed down from generation to generation. They would be to America what the Homeric poems were to Greece, and many long ages would not obliterate or destroy them.

It has been argued, by way of anticipating such views as these, that the unexampled severities and oppressions of the Spanish conquerors, broke the spirit of these once proud nations, and so trampled them in the dust, as to annihilate those sentiments and affections, which form the basis of national pride and traditional lore. It is a violent assumption, unsupported by any parallel in history, ancient or modern. Remove them from their ancient inheritance, transplant them to other climes, surround them with other scenes, amalgamate them with other people, and they may, in process of time, forget their origin and their name. But, in the midst of their father's sepulchres, with their temples, their pyramids, their palaces, all around them,

Their native soil beneath their feet,
Their native skies above them,—

it is inconceivable, impossible.

At this point I shall probably be interrupted, by the inquisitive reader, with the question, whether I am not overturning my own position, by insisting that the

ancient Aztecs, and their works, must necessarily live in tradition, while I allow that the Mexican Indians retain no memory of their ancestors. I conceive not. The ruins to which I refer, are not those of the Mexican and Tezcucan cities, which were sacked by the Spaniards, almost demolished, and then rebuilt in a comparatively modern style of architecture. Of those we need no native tradition. The Spanish histories have told us all that we can know of them.

But even of these, as the Spaniards found them, we have no certain evidence that the people who then occupied them, were the *sole* builders. We have both tradition and history to justify us in asserting that they were not. Another race had preceded them, and filled the country with their works of genius and art. The Toltecs, whose advent into the territory of Anahuac, is placed as far back as the seventh century of the Christian era, were not inferior to the Aztecs in refinement, and the knowledge of the mechanic arts. To them the Aztec paintings accord the credit of most of the science which prevailed among themselves, and acknowledged them as the fountain head of their civilization. The capital of their empire was at Tula, north of the Mexican valley, and the remains of extensive buildings were to be seen there at the time of the conquest. To the same people were ascribed the ruins of other noble edifices, found in various places throughout the country, so vast and magnificent, that, with some writers, "the name, *Toltec*, has passed into a synonyme for *architect*." Following in their footsteps, and acknowledging them as their teachers, it would not be strange if the Aztecs should, in some instances, have

occupied the buildings *they* left behind, and employed the remnant that still remained in the country, in erecting others.

But, without insisting upon this conjecture, it is clear that there were other and earlier builders than the Aztecs. The Toltecs passed away, as a nation, a full century, according to the legend, before the arrival of the Aztecs. Their works filled the country. Accounts of them abounded in the Tezcucan tablets. They were celebrated by the Aztec painters. They were still magnificent and wonderful in ruins, when the Spaniards arrived. And yet, among the present race of Indians in Mexico, there is no tradition respecting them, no knowledge of their origin, no interest whatever in their history.

From these premises, we have a choice of two conclusions. Either the ruined buildings and cities of Anahuac are not the work of the comparatively modern race of Aztecs, or the present Indians are not the descendants of that race. That the former conclusion is true, I think there cannot be a doubt. The latter *may* be true, also, to a great extent. That refined and haughty people may have wasted entirely away under the grinding yoke of their new task-masters, and the indolent inefficient slaves, that remain as their nominal representatives, may be only the degenerate posterity of inferior tribes, the vassals of the Mexican crown.

Another consideration which strongly favors the view I have taken, with respect to the antiquity of these ruins, is the character of the ruins themselves, and the condition in which they are found. That they do not all belong to one race, nor to one age, it seems to me

no careful or candid observer can deny. They are of different constructions, and different styles of architecture. They are widely different in their finish and adornments. And they are in every stage of decay, from a habitable and tolerably comfortable dwelling, to a confused mass of undistinguishable ruins. In all these particulars, as well as in the gigantic forests which have grown up in the walls and on the terraces of some of them, and the deep deposit of vegetable mould which has accumulated upon others, they are clearly seen to belong to different and distant ages, and consequently to be the work of many different artists. That some of them were the work of the Toltecs, is well substantiated, as we have already seen. What portion of the great area of ruins to assign to them, I know not. But if, as one of the most cautious and judicious historians supposes, they were the architects of Mitla, Palenque and Copan, thus fixing the date of those magnificent cities several centuries anterior to the rise of the Aztec dynasty, they could not have been the *first* of the American builders. *Their* works are still in a comparatively good state of preservation, and may remain, for ages to come, the dumb yet eloquent monuments of their greatness; while others, not only in their immediate vicinity, but in different parts of the country, are crumbled, decayed, scattered, and buried, as if long ages had passed over them, before the foundations of the former were laid. There is every thing in the style and appearance of the ruins to favor this conclusion, and to confirm the opinion, that some of them are farther removed in their origin from the Toltecs, than the Toltecs are from us. Some of those described in

the preceding chapters of this work, are manifestly many ages older than those of Chi-chen, Uxmal and others in Yucatan, which I visited on a former occasion.

Having extended these remarks somewhat farther than I intended, perhaps I ought to apologize to the reader for asking his attention, a few moments, to another problem growing out of this subject, which has given rise to more discussion, and been attended with less satisfaction in its results, than any other. I refer to the origin of the ancient American races. From what quarter of the globe did they come? And how did they get here?

The last question I shall not touch at all. It will answer itself, as soon as the other is settled. And, if that cannot be settled at all—if we are utterly foiled in our efforts to ascertain whence they came—it will be of little avail to inquire for the how.

The learned author of "The Vestiges of Creation," and other equally profound speculators of the Monbodd school, would probably find an easy way to unravel the enigma, on their sceptical theory of the progressive generation of man. But regarding the Mosaic history as worthy not only of a general belief, but of a literal interpretation, I cannot dispose of the question in that summary way. I would rather meet it with all its seemingly irreconcilable difficulties about it, or not meet it at all, than favor the subtle atheism of these baptized canting Voltaires, and relinquish my early and cherished faith, that man is the immediate offspring of God, the peculiar workmanship of his Divine hand. There is nothing soothing to my pride of reason, nothing grateful to my affections, nothing elevating to my

faith, in the idea that man is but an improved species of monkey, a civilized ourang-outang, with his tail worn off, or driven in.

There is but one solitary tradition among all the American races, bearing upon the general question of their origin; and that, singularly enough, is universal among them. It represents them as coming from northwest. From what other portion of the world, from what distance, at what time, and in what manner, it does not in any way declare, or intimate. Whether it was five centuries ago, or fifty, there is not, I believe, a single tribe that pretends to know, or to guess. And yet there is not a tribe on this side the great northern lakes, among whom this general tradition of the migration of their ancestors from the northwest, is not found. There are many and various traditions among them in respect to other matters, presenting many and curious coincidences with the traditionary and fabulous history of some of the oldest nations in the world. But, on this point, the origin of their own races, they have nothing to say, except that, at a remote period of antiquity, their fathers came from the northwest.

With such an index as this, pointing so decidedly and unchangeably to Behring's strait, where the coast of Asia approaches within fifty miles of that of America, it would seem, at first sight, that the question might be easily answered. And so it could be, but that some authors are more fond of conjecture than of certainty, of doubt than of probability. To those who believe, with Moses, that the peopling of the earth commenced in Asia, there is manifestly no mode of accounting for the population of America, so natural as that

to which this one omni-prevalent tradition points. It would have been considered abundantly sufficient and satisfactory, if it had not been continually involved with other questions, on the solution of which it does not necessarily depend.

One writer, for example, thinks it impossible that these people could have come to America, by way of Behring's Strait, because there are *animals* in the tropical regions who could not have come that way. Be it so. The question relates not to animals, but to *men*. By whatever other way they might have come, it is not at all probable that they would have brought tigers, monkeys, or rattle-snakes with them. If it could be proved, by authentic and unquestionable records, that they crossed the Atlantic or the Pacific in ships, the mystery of the tropical animals would still remain to be solved.

Another, and it is a numerous class, whose imagination is inflamed with fancied resemblances in the languages, customs, traditions and mythology of the Indian races, to those of particular nations in the old World, deems it absolutely necessary to construct some other ancient, but now obliterated highway, to our shores, from those parts of Europe or Asia, nearest to that from which his favorite theory supposes them to have sprung. To some, Iceland was the natural stepping stone, a half-way house, from the North of Europe. To others, a chain of islands once stretched from the shores of Africa to those of South America—a sort of Giant's Causeway from Continent to Continent, miraculously thrown up for the purpose of stocking this Western World with men and animals, and then, like a useless

draw-bridge, as miraculously laid aside. Other theories, not less extravagant than these, have been invented, and strenuously maintained, for the benevolent purpose of accommodating the poor Aborigines with an easy passage from their supposed birth place to their present homes. Yet, strange to say, those obstinate and ungrateful savages all persist in declaring that, when their ancestors arrived in this country, they came by way of the northwest.

It is one of the prominent errors of most of the writers on this subject, that, with the exception of the Esquimaux, they aim to find a common origin for all the American tribes. True, there is a common type to all the North American Indians, and there is good reason to suppose that they sprung from a common stock. But it is not so with the nations of Central and South America, or rather with those of them whose mighty works have given rise to these discussions. I think it cannot be questioned, that there were among them, the representatives of many different nations or races. Of this the sculptured heads we have exhibited from among the ruins of their ancient cities, bear witness. Compare the outlines and features of the heads represented on pages 128, 130, 136, and 178, of the present work, first with each other, then with the different representations of the human head, as found among these ancient relics by other travellers, and then again with the types of the four great divisions of the human family. The comparison exhibits this curious result, that the American, or Indian type, has no representative among these sculptured figures; while almost every variety of the Caucasian and Mongolian is found there.

If the portrait of Montezuma, in the second volume of Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, be taken as a genuine likeness, it is plain that he did not belong to the American race. There is no mark of the Indian about it.

It will be admitted, I suppose, that Art, in all ages, and among all nations, is but a humble imitator of Nature. The Sculptor, and the Painter, works always by a model. His *beau idéal* is the highest form of living beauty which he sees around him. He may select and combine the features of several subjects, to make a perfect whole. But these features are all those of the living beings with whom he is conversant, and represent the race to which he belongs. And whenever he departs from the living model, except to select and combine, his figures become invariably grotesque, ridiculous and disgusting.

Was it because the ancient American artists, at the time when their works of art were executed, had never seen a specimen of what we call the American race, that there is no good representation of the Indian head among their works? We are not surprised that the African is wanting there; for, notwithstanding the "Giant's Causeway" above alluded to, no individual of that race seems ever to have visited the shores of America, except by compulsion. They were unknown to the Aborigines, till they were introduced by the whites, as slaves. Shall I venture to infer, from the absence of the Indian type, that that race was also unknown here, at the time when these artists flourished on the American soil? Were all these great works constructed and finished before the present races of Indians found their way into that part of the Continent? How old, then,

are the works? Who were the builders? From what part of the great human family did they spring?

In treating banteringly of the "Talismanic Penates," in my tenth chapter, I presumed to draw from them some evidence of the Asiatic origin of the people by whom they were cherished. The figures on the 178th page are representatives of originals found only in that part of the world. The solitary tradition referred to above, points in the same direction. Did Tartary, China, or Japan, furnish to America, ages ago, a race of sculptors and palace-builders?

In the early ages of the world's history, the families of men were far more unsettled, and migratory in their habits, than they now are. It was not an uncommon thing for whole nations to change their abodes at once. The north of Europe, and the adjacent regions of Asia, like an over-populous hive, sent out many swarms of restless adventurers, to overrun and occupy the fairer fields of the south. Goths, Vandals, Huns, swept over the land, in successive deluges, that threatened to overturn every vestige of ancient civilization. But the mighty flood rolled back from the walls of Rome, and carried with it the arts and sciences, and the enervating luxuries of the south. In all these desperate encounters of barbarism with civilization, there was an extensive interchange, and blending of nations and races. Each melted into each, like the glaciers of the mountain, and the lakes of the valley, blended and lost in the stream that bears them both to the ocean. The same irruptions, the same amalgamations of conquerors with the conquered, took place in earlier ages, in the far east. And there is no violent improbability in supposing, that

the overcharged fountain of humanity, in the central regions, sometimes overleaped its eastern barriers, as well as its western, and, meeting with no resistance, as in the south, spread itself quite to the shores of the Pacific, and thence into the neighboring continent of America. This may have been done at many different and distant periods, even back to the dispersion of Babel. Who shall say it was not so? We know almost as little of ancient eastern Asia, as of ancient America. But we *do* know that it *might* have furnished all the races that are known, or supposed, to have existed here. If we had not authentic records for the irruptions of the northern hordes, and for the great crusades of the Middle Ages, the Old World would furnish enigmas, as difficult to be solved, as those of the New.



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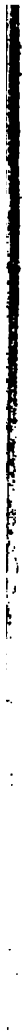
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